

A man and a woman are shown in a close, intimate embrace. The man, on the left, has short dark hair and is wearing a white dress shirt. The woman, on the right, has long, straight blonde hair and is wearing a dark purple, possibly silk, dress. They are positioned in a grand, well-lit interior space, likely a mansion or a large house, with a curved staircase and stone walls visible in the background. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a romantic atmosphere.

HE WANTED HER
IN HIS BED...
AT ANY COST.

LEVERAGE

PART 1

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BEST-SELLING EROTIC ROMANCE AUTHOR

Boston Kincaid is ruthless when comes to getting what he wants – and from the minute he sees Julianna Holly, he'll stop at nothing to have her in his bed. It's all about finding the right leverage, right? When Julianna finds herself within Boston's crosshairs, she doesn't stand a chance. But neither realizes how one indecent proposal has the power to change their lives forever.

Leverage: Part I

By Alexx Andria

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*This story is intended for mature readers only.

The following installment of this three-

part serial is approx. 21,000 words and is a work of fiction.

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Boston Kincaid was used to getting what he wanted — not because things came easily to him but because he didn't accept obstacles.

And he wanted her.

There were a million different reasons why he shouldn't, but none mattered. She invaded his fantasies, his dreams, interrupted his thoughts with frightening regularity and he figured that the only way he could ease his frustration was to have her in his possession.

But first he had to find his leverage. He suffered no illusions that

what he was doing was ethical, moral, or even legal but, again none of that mattered. Perhaps he was obsessed, yes... That was a good word for it. Obsessed. But if the advantage of being filthy wealthy was the ability to remove all obstacles, Boston didn't hesitate to use every resource available to him.

And that included finding a way to bend Julianna to his will.

“She's here.” Although Richard, his right-hand man, knew better than to allow a hint of judgment to color his voice, Boston could see the questioning look in the older man's eyes. “Shall I show her in?”

Boston stood and straightened his jacket, tugging on his sleeve until

they were impeccably straight, a predatory grin stretching his mouth. "Yes, please do. And close the door behind you."

Richard opened the door and a curvy blonde, big brown eyes wide and unsure, walked in, obviously confused as to why Boston Kincaid, a billionaire several times over, had requested an audience. He enjoyed her confusion, but even more so, he couldn't help but feast his eyes on every curve on her lush figure and he couldn't wait to taste every inch. Was it presumptuous of him to assume that she would agree to his terms? Perhaps...but fortune favored the bold. What he was about to propose was likely the boldest move he'd ever made

in his life. And he couldn't wait. Richard closed the door quietly, enclosing them both in the privacy of his expansive office.

“Please take a seat, Miss Holly,” he said, his eyes dancing. She was even prettier than she was the first time he'd seen her, trying to balance a tray full of dirty glasses, glasses barely clinging to the tip of her nose. At first glance, she wouldn't have drawn a single glance from any of the people he usually associated with — short, awkward, and plainly not the most coordinated — but Boston hadn't been able to take his eyes off her. Not even for a second. Her breasts, barely contained in that ugly ill-fitting uniform, nearly begged for his

mouth, and those hips were made for his hands as he drove into her. Everything about her was rounded and feminine and he had to have her.

“I don't understand why I'm here,” she started, looking nervously around the room. “Have I done something wrong?”

“Do you know who I am?”

She shook her head. “No. Should I?” she asked, pushing her glasses further up on the bridge of her nose. “I don't have a television and I don't pay attention much to the news. I mostly read. When I have free time that is.”

“My name is Boston Kincaid. I could spend the next hour talking about all the things I own, businesses, houses,

etc. but that's not really why I have brought you here. I have a business proposition for you of a unique persuasion.”

A subtle frown gathered on her forehead. “A business proposition? Are you sure you have the right girl? I dropped out of college and I've been working at the Tasty Perk for the last six months. I'm not sure I have anything to offer someone like you.”

He couldn't help the smile. “I think you're exactly the person I've been looking for.”

“What kind of person would that be?”

Instead of answering, he said, “I always make a habit of doing a thorough

background check on the people I plan to have in my life. I know quite a lot about you Julianna Holly.”

“You do?” She asked, plainly confused. “Why?”

“I know that you have a brother you care a lot about. And I know you're doing your best to care for him. But it must be terribly difficult to bear the financial burden of his medical needs all by yourself.”

“How do you know that?” she asked, shifting with discomfort at the personal nature of his background check. “And why would you need to know such personal stuff about me and my family?”

“As you can imagine, a person of my position must take every precaution

so I hope you can forgive my intrusion.” She nodded but remained wary, much like the gazelle watching for the lion. He suppressed the predatory smile and pushed forward, impatient to end this forced social nicety so that he could make his offer. “You have nothing to fear. I found nothing that gave me pause. You have been a good girl to this point in your life. Good grades, civic volunteerism and only one parking ticket, courtesy of the university campus police. They’re such a nuisance, aren’t they?” he asked in commiseration, which prompted a small smile.

“I was late for an exam and decided to risk the fine to park in an area that was designated for parking passes

only.”

“Was it worth it?”

“Not sure. I got a B on the exam and the ticket cost me \$150. That’s a lot for a college student on a budget,” she added for his benefit assuming he wouldn’t know how it felt to be stuck with limited funds. “Paying off that ticket meant I was eating ramen noodles for two weeks. Have you ever tried to exist on high sodium and carbs alone?”

“I can’t say that I have.”

“It’s rough.”

“I can imagine.”

Julianna pushed her hair behind her ear and glanced around his office. “Nice place. Smells like old wood and lemon polish. Like an old library.”

“Is that a compliment?”

“Yeah, I like books. I can’t usually afford to buy them so I spend a lot of my free time in libraries. Some people visit museums, I visit libraries.”

“And my office reminds you of one you visited?”

She smiled. “Yeah. It was a small town, not even big enough for a stoplight and the museum actually shared space with the library. One side of the building housed the antiques and the other end, books. But there was a huge fireplace in the middle of the room with a sitting area for reading, like one you’d see in a castle or something. It was amazing. I always thought if I had a lot of money, I’d build a library in my house

something like that. It was cozy and warm and invited curling up with a good book.” She glanced at him shyly to ask. “Do you have a huge library like that?”

“I do...not that I get to spend much time there. I haven’t read for pleasure for a very long time. However, the last time I was in there...my pleasure wasn’t found between the pages of a book.”

She blushed at the casual mention of his sexual exploits and his groin tightened at the inadvertently sexy action. “So...not to be rude or anything but...why did you bring me here? I’m still a bit confused and I need to get back to work.”

Boston rubbed his mouth to keep

his excitement at bay. Yes, to the point. “As I mentioned before, I know a bit about you. The fact that you dropped out of college to care for your brother says a lot about your character.” Ironic, that he would admire her for such a selfless gesture and yet he was about to ask her to compromise her dignity and integrity. If he weren't such a bastard, he might've felt a twinge of conscience. But just standing in her presence, was enough to fire his blood. “Let me get straight to the point. I want to help you with your brother. But before you get the wrong idea about my intentions, know this... nothing comes for free. What I'm about to offer you might be shocking, it might even offend you. But I'm a man

accustomed to getting what he wants and right now I want you.”

Julianna's mouth dropped open at his frank statement. Her voice rang with indignation as she asked, “What the hell are you talking about? What do you mean you want me? Do you mean...?” She couldn't even say the words, which he found quite endearing. Hell, everything about her he found delicious. She swallowed and stared. “I think you have the wrong impression of me. I'm not a whore so if you're about to make me an indecent proposal, save your breath.” She rose on unsteady feet, wobbling on her cheap heels. “Good day Mr. Kincaid.”

She turned to leave but Boston

wasn't about to let her go. "It's a pity your brother can't get the help he needs. I would imagine that if you had more resources at your disposal, Tom might actually walk again. I've done a little research and I found a facility in New Zealand with some cutting edge technology and therapy designed to help repair spinal injuries, much like your brother's. I imagine, a man like him, who was once very active, dreams of someday getting out of that wheelchair."

"What are you saying?" she asked.

"Don't play coy. Simply that with more resources, your brother might get the help he needs. If you were agreeable to my business proposition, I

would happily provide those resources to your brother. Actually, it's a very simple arrangement with mutual benefit so there's no need to take offense. Honestly, women have been bartering their bodies since the beginning of time so it's hardly a new concept."

"How dare you dangle something like that in front of me. Who are you? What kind of man are you?"

"I'm a man who gets what he wants. By any means possible."

Her stricken expression told him volumes about her opinion of him but he didn't care nor did it cut when she said, "You are very cruel."

He shrugged. It wasn't the first time he'd been accused of cruelty and it

wouldn't be the last. "Would you like to know more?"

"No."

Boston reached into his desk and tossed a plane ticket toward her. "Right there is a first-class plane ticket to New Zealand purchased in your brother's name. He already has a suite reserved at the facility. There is a waiting list two years long for people to get into this program. With one phone call, Tom could be there at the top of the list. It seems a small thing I'm asking of you for such a life-changing possibility for your brother."

"And what exactly are you asking of me?" she asked, her eyes watering. For such a small thing, she

radiated energy. Everything about her seemed to vibrate with youth and energy. Boston was 10 years older than she was and he couldn't wait to peel the clothes from her body. "I suppose you know enough about me to know that what you're asking of me goes against everything I believe in."

At that he chuckled. "Ahh yes... I've always been fascinated by people who take a vow of chastity before marriage. Take heart, most women lose their virginity for far less noble purposes."

Her cheeks colored. "You're taking something precious from me by suggesting such a thing."

"Nonsense. It's a thin sheath of

skin that you could've lost horseback riding. Don't place undue value on something so easily lost.”

“It's not about a sheath of skin. It's about something I was saving for someone who loved me, not a callous businessman with more money than morals.”

“So be it. I'm happy to play the part of the bastard as long as I get what I want.”

"How can you be so cruel? I don't understand. What did I do to deserve this?"

"Perhaps the question should be how did you get so lucky? Do you realize how many women would love to be in your position? I'm willing to give

you something no one else would ever be able to."

"Yes, but the price is my soul."

"Please. Don't be so dramatic. I'm asking for the use of your body for a predetermined space of time. And for that right, I will pay you handsomely as well as provide your brother with the care he so desperately needs to resume his life. Imagine, if you weren't caring for an injured brother, perhaps you could go back to school or stop working two jobs. If you realign your thinking, what I'm offering you is truly a blessing."

Her stare narrowed. "Only someone who has never valued anything more than what money could buy would say something like that."

“Perhaps. Would you like to know more about your new place in life?”

“I haven't said yes.”

“A formality. You and I both know you're going to say yes. You would be a fool to say no and I know you're not fool.”

The defiance died in her eyes and he knew he had her. The victory hardened his cock and lust pounded through his veins. “Take a seat. We shall discuss terms.” He waited for her to slowly sink into the chair before continuing. “For the sum of \$1 million you will move into my home and into my bed. You will tend to all of my needs. Your body belongs to me. I will provide

you with a new wardrobe, a new car, and spending money. In addition I will see to it that your brother receives the best care for his rehabilitation.”

She swallowed and there was a subtle shake to her voice as she asked, “And when will this *relationship* start?”

He leaned forward, pinning her with his gaze. “Immediately,” he answered silkily and she shuddered. “Do you agree to my terms?”

“I need time to think about it.”

“No. Decide now.”

She gasped in distress but he knew the key to successful negotiations was to hit hard and fast and this was one deal he didn't plan to lose. She looked as if she'd rather run away but she jerked

a short nod. His smile widened. “Excellent. You’re making the right choice.”

“Then why do I feel like throwing up?”

“Because you’re letting go of the old you to embrace a new one.” She didn’t look convinced and he found her reluctance adorable. “Release your hair,” he instructed, wanting to see those golden waves tumble down her back. Her hair, tousled and wild, was just the right length for gripping a solid handful. He had to restrain himself before he lost control right there in his office. “I have something for you, something to seal the deal between us.”

She eyed him with suspicion.

“And what would that be?”

He reached into his desk and removed a Tiffany box. He cracked it open and removed the tiny, delicate bracelet. He'd had it custom made just for her. His initials were woven into the tiny gold thread. It was impossibly beautiful and ridiculously expensive but more importantly, it was a symbol of his ownership of her that only they would know. He walked to her. “Hold out your wrist,” he instructed as he clasped the bracelet on. “You are never to take this off. If I see this off of you there will be consequences. Do not test me for you will not like the man I become. You belong to me and as such you will wear this as a symbol of who has claimed you.

Am I clear?”

“Do you see me as nothing more than a pet?”

“A very valuable pet,” he corrected her. “A very lucky pet.”

She shook her head. “A pet just the same.”

Had he not just given her the world in exchange for something relatively small? “Some pets are cherished above people,” he pointed out gruffly and she shrugged as if only someone like him would say something like that and it made him feel small, which didn't sit well at all. “It doesn't matter how you look at our relationship. What matters is that you obey the rules set between us.”

“Fine. I will wear your bracelet,” she agreed but he felt no satisfaction. He wanted her to *want* to wear the bracelet. Julianna plucked at the gold. “So delicate. What if it breaks? I’m very clumsy.”

His smile became indulgent. “Than I shall make you another.”

Julianna accepted his answer and then pierced him with her gaze to ask, “Why me? I’m sure there are a million different women out there who would jump at the chance to be your pampered pet. I’m clearly not one of them and yet you’ve coerced me into accepting. Surely, you could’ve persuaded someone far less difficult for your little game.”

His breath became shallow as he stared into her deep brown eyes. The knowledge that no one had ever touched her was enough to send him into orbit before even taking her. But he couldn't explain why she intrigued him like no other because he didn't know. Instead of answering truthfully, he answered, "Why not?" before pressing his lips to hers in a sweet, almost innocent kiss. Her breath caught and she made a small sound in her throat that he wanted to suck into his mouth. He would wait before he took her for the first time – he wanted everything to be perfect — but he was almost shaking with the need to explore every inch of her body. His cock pulsed, hard and ready. "Tell me of your sexual

experiences,” he said roughly. “I want to know every detail before we begin.”

Her cheeks bloomed with heat and her tongue darted out to slick her lips and he couldn't stop himself from lowering his mouth to taste her again. She was as sweet as he imagined she would be but now he had to know her intimately. His hand reached down to caress her quim through the soft cotton of her dress and she jumped at the contact. “What are you doing?” she asked, her tone strangled by mortification. “Here? Now? Oh my God...what if someone walks in?”

“No one will disturb us,” he assured her, loving the warmth beneath his palm, knowing that if he were to dip

his finger deep into her core, it would come out wet with her sweetness. “I want to know your dirty secrets,” he said.

“You didn’t pay for my secrets, dirty or otherwise,” she answered, her chest rising rapidly. “My secrets are my own.”

He growled at being denied. “You belong to me now.”

She countered with, “Only my body. Never my heart.”

His mouth stretched in a cruel smile. “I have no interest in your heart, silly girl. Your body and your consent are all I require.” To drive home the point, he removed her glasses and gave her shoulders a gentle push,

commanding, “On your knees, Julianna. Your service to me starts now. Have you ever sucked a cock?”

She covered her face with her hands as she lowered to her knees but nodded.

“Good. I suppose a college girl would’ve found herself in a situation where a cock ended up in her face at some point,” he said but he hated the idea of her pleasuring anyone but himself in that way. A growl of possession surprised him. “Let’s see how good you are,” he said, unzipping his trousers with mildly shaking fingers. He released his cock and smiled with satisfaction when her gaze widened at his size. He’d always been blessed with

a well-endowed penis, something he'd realized in high school and quickly put to good use with every pretty girl who'd allowed him into her panties. "Nice, huh?" he said, palming the length and squeezing the moisture from the head. "Look what you do to me?" he teased with a wide grin but she wasn't smiling. Julianna lifted her gaze to him and shook her head.

"I can't get my mouth around that thing," she said, although her pupils had darkened and her tongue had snaked out to dart across her lips. "It's impossible."

But Boston was willing to bet she wasn't worried about her mouth. He smiled indulgently, and nudged her soft lips with the head of his cock. "Let's

give it a try and see what happens,” he suggested playfully before guiding his cock to her soft mouth. She made a mewling noise at the back of her throat but she opened for him, squeezing her eyes shut as the head passed beyond her teeth and slid into her wet mouth. “Caress my ball sac tenderly,” he instructed, closing his eyes to the pleasure as her tongue danced across the sensitive head. “Ahhh, that’s it...very good...” Better than good, he wanted to groan, barely containing the voracious appetite building behind every soft hip thrust against her mouth. Hot, wet, tantalizingly erotic, Boston had never been so consumed by the pleasure of a woman’s mouth. His knees weakened as

her tongue drilled into the opening at the head, surprising him with move. She may be a virgin but she was pretty adept at sucking cock, he realized, suddenly needing the support of his desk to remain standing. She tugged at his cock and gripped his balls and his thighs quivered at the rough touch. For a tiny thing, she was stronger than she looked.

His eyes popped open and he was thrown by how quickly his need to come skyrocketed at the sight of her lovely, wide mouth devouring him inch by inch. *Ahhh...shit...* he wasn't going to last, not like this. *Slow the fuck down,* he told himself, trying slow his hip thrusts so as not to hurt her. His chest tightened and his stomach muscles

clenched as his orgasm barreled down the pipe like a locomotive that'd just jumped the track. He couldn't stop it; he was going to come. A split second decision stilled his warning as he exploded into her mouth, shuddering with pleasure and nearly losing the ability to remain standing as white-hot jets of fluid went down her throat. Julianna stumbled back, choking and wiping at her mouth, glaring as sudden tears glittered in her eyes.

“Don't do that again,” she warned when she could speak again as he straightened on unsteady limbs. She'd sucked the strength right out of him. Holy hell, that was one bang up blowjob, even if she looked ready to brain him with his

marble penholder. He hadn't meant to come in her mouth but honestly, he couldn't exactly spurt onto the floor. What would the cleaning lady think of that mess? But seeing Julianna with angry tears coursing down her cheeks, made him immediately defensive.

“Sorry, can't make that promise. I liked coming in your mouth.” Boston tucked his spent cock back into his trousers and zipped up with a quick motion. He knuckled her cheek and caught a tear with a small smile even though she was sending daggers his way as she replaced her glasses on her nose. “You're pretty good at that. Are you sure you're a virgin? You didn't just hustle me, did you? Pretending to be the virgin

without much experience, when in truth, you're as experienced as a two-dollar whore?"

Julianna narrowed her gaze at his crude humor, to retort coolly. "I hardly think you are the kind of man who would allow himself to be hustled by anyone."

"True enough," he agreed, still riding the high of his conquest. He couldn't remember the last time he'd felt so euphoric after a sexual encounter. Damn, this was better than any street drug he'd ever dabbled with. "But usually women with little sexual experience don't know what to do with a cock of my size. Let's just say I was pleasantly surprised by your skill."

"Just because I haven't had sex

doesn't mean I haven't had sexual experiences," she said, deflating his previous good humor. Why did he hate the idea of her with anyone else? She seemed to realize her comment had struck a nerve and it was her turn to smile. "And you know what they say... practice makes perfect."

Ouch. He glared at her nerve. "Good," he managed to return with an equally frosty smile. "I look forward to sampling more of your honed talents."

A moment passed between them and Julianna exhaled with a fatalistic shake of her head. "This isn't going to work. I don't like you."

"And why should that matter?"

Julianna blinked in surprise at

his blunt question. “Well, because it does,” she answered with a tiny stamp of her foot. “The act of sex is very intimate and I would imagine you should at least *like* the person you are doing it with.”

“Your feelings toward me are inconsequential as long as you don’t bite.”

At the implication of his statement, she blushed two shades of pink. *Yes, that’s right...I’m talking about when my cock is stuffed in your mouth.* He watched her struggle with the urge to tell him to go to hell but when she remained silent, he shrugged. *Missed opportunities, love.* Back to business. He returned to his chair and leaned back with a self-satisfied smile. And why

shouldn't he be satisfied? Thus far the day had been very productive. And relaxing. Perhaps he should request a blowjob every day as part of their new arrangement. The happy thought remained with him as he said, "Richard will finalize the documents and the financial arrangements as well as have your belongings delivered to my home. Is there anything else you require before we conclude our first meeting?"

She wiped at her tears, a single expression of desolation marring her lovely beauty, before she cleared her voice and lifted her chin, to say in a hard tone, "My brother better have the best of everything for the price I'm paying."

Boston smiled at her spirit,

impressed. “Don’t worry. I don’t renege on my word,” he assured her, adding with a primal grin. “I look forward to being the first man between your thighs. Do whatever you need to prepare yourself for this evening,” he said, then added, “Richard will take you to the spa for your waxing, but I prefer a little hair on the pussy so please, a landing strip would be perfect.”

She skewed her gaze away but nodded nonetheless.

As soon as she was gone, Boston let out the breath he hadn’t known he was holding. Julianna was no easy conquest and the war he saw in her eyes was bound to leave scars. Tonight couldn’t come soon enough. Thank God,

he had work to distract himself from what he wanted so desperately at the moment.

A pervasive chill settled into Julianna's body as she signed the pages-long legal document with trembling fingers and thrust it back at Richard before she lost her nerve. What was she doing? How had things come to this? She wiped at her mouth, still tasting him. She'd never met a man so handsome yet so utterly cruel. To dangle such a prize in front of her only to snatch it away unless she agreed to his disgusting demand? In all of her life she'd never met anyone so depraved. She closed her eyes and when she opened them again, she stared at Richard, repulsed. "How

can you work for a man like him?”

Richard remained expressionless as he tucked the paperwork into his interior breast pocket. “Money is a great motivator. I see it motivated you.” Julianna’s cheeks colored, hating that he would throw that in her face, even if it were true. Richard continued with a shrug, “At least I know he’ll never asked me to suck his cock. That’s what he has you for.”

“You think I’m a whore for doing this?”

He ignored her flash of indignation and began walking to her front door, stopping to say, “What I think doesn’t matter.”

“I’m not a whore,” she said

quietly anyway. Maybe if she kept saying it, she'd start believing it in her heart. "What would you do if you were in my shoes?"

"Everyone has a good story. Even you."

She balled her fists. "So I should've just let my brother rot in that wheelchair, in a place hardly fit for a dog because that's all we can afford? I guess I'm a whore because I sold myself to help my brother. Well, at the very least, a whore with a heart of gold, right?"

"Why do you care how I feel about you? I am no one to you."

"Because I don't like the feeling of being judged for making an

impossible choice. I'm just trying to do what's right."

"Then it shouldn't matter what others think. They don't live your life and they don't walk in your shoes."

That simple logic struck a chord and she let it sink in for a moment. "I suppose you're right," Julianna slowly agreed, wondering about the older man. She'd assumed that anyone who would work for Boston Kincaid was devoid of all morals but Richard was putting that assumption to the test. "So what do I do now?" she asked.

"A car will come to pick you up in about two hours. Have your things ready to be transported to the house. Be mindful of what you bring. Only bring

the essentials; everything else will be purchased at Mr. Kincaid's pleasure. Also, be sure to wear both of his gifts tonight as he will expect to see them."

Her stare strayed to the white box formerly tied with the pink ribbon and bit back the hot words that danced on her tongue. She wanted to tell Richard to send the lingerie back because she wouldn't wear it but to do so would be contradictory to what she'd agreed to and simply nodded. She was already wearing Boston's other gift, though she hardly considered the lovely bracelet a gift when it was merely a symbol of his ownership of her. Richard smiled with approval when she didn't balk. "Smart girl," he said, starting to

leave but Julianna stopped him with a question.

“Are you loyal to him?”

“Of course I am.”

“Why?”

“The simple answer is because he pays me to be but the complicated answer is far more complex. I’ve known his family for a very long time. I can say that Boston hasn’t always been this way.”

“You mean he wasn’t always a selfish, self-absorbed asshole?”

“He’s a Kincaid. He always had the potential to be that way. But at one time, he was less hard.”

“What happened?”

“That’s not my story to tell.”

Although he appeared ready to leave, Richard paused to offer one last bit of advice. “Do yourself a favor and never question him. If he wants you to wake him up every morning with a blowjob, give it to him. If he wants to fuck you in the ass, bend over, part your cheeks and beg for it.”

The vulgarity of Richard’s advice made her want to vomit. She couldn’t see herself doing any of those things but she’d just signed on the dotted line and the ink was still fresh. “And if I don't?”

“Then he will make your life miserable and when that no longer works, he'll destroy anyone who was ever close to you. Starting with your

brother.”

What kind of monster had she just tied herself to? How could one person be that bad? “He’s an evil man,” she said, her eyes filling.

Richard surprised her when he disagreed. “Not evil, just determined. You should be flattered. I’ve never seen him so taken with a single woman before.”

Flattered? It was difficult to feel flattered when she suffered the knowledge she’d sold herself to the man. But Boston Kincaid had taught her a valuable lesson — even dignity could be bought.

“What if he beats me?” she asked. “What then?”

At that Richard smiled.

“Depends on the kind of beating. Some hits can ring with pleasure.”

“Not in my world.”

“You're not in your world anymore. Good evening, Miss Holly. And good luck.”

Richard closed the door behind him and she dropped onto her old, worn-out sofa. She plucked at the fraying fabric, a near hysterical smile following as she recalled how she'd been stressed about the seventy-five dollars the sofa had been priced at the thrift store. After Boston Kincaid was finished with her, she'd be able to buy something brand new and expensive. But she liked this worn-out, ugly sofa, she nearly wailed to

the empty apartment. She dropped her head into her hands and cried.

There was a time when she'd wished that a handsome stranger would sweep her off her feet and make all of her problems go away. Reality had a way of squashing those girlish fantasies. After Tom's accident, she'd had no choice but to quit school to pay for the care facility he was housed at because her apartment wasn't equipped for someone with his needs. Tom was the only family she had left. Their parents were gone with no extended family to speak of, so what was she supposed to do? She thought of the cutting edge rehabilitation center in New Zealand and how Tom would finally get top-notch

care and her spirits lifted a tiny bit until she wondered how she was going to explain this sudden lucky break. Should she tell him the truth? Would he believe it? Would he turn up his nose in disgust or would he understand? It hardly seemed possible that she was even doing this at all. She rubbed her temples hoping to massage away the tension headache that was beginning to throb. She glanced around her small apartment and began to pack.

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“Is she getting her affairs in order?” he asked once Richard returned.

“Yes. The car will pick her up at six and bring her to the house as requested.”

“Excellent.” Boston said, the anticipation nearly killing him. “Did you give her the gift?”

“I did.”

“And?” he inquired impatiently. “What did she think?”

“She will look quite lovely in it,” Richard answered tactfully and Boston actually chuckled.

“She hated it didn’t she?” he guessed.

“I think she is struggling with the unique nature of your relationship,” Richard ventured. “But I think she’ll come around eventually. You have a way with women.”

“Yes, well, my money does anyway.” He gestured for Richard to

leave and was left with his thoughts. What was it about this girl? Generally, he preferred his women tall, lithe and nearly rail-thin. Julianna was the antithesis to every woman he'd ever been attracted to.

But he couldn't deny that she turned him inside out and backwards and had since the moment he laid eyes on her. A dangerous thing, that. He couldn't afford such an attraction without finding some way to control it. People were always trying to find ways to get to him — from gold diggers and con artists to desperate business owners hoping to find a deep-pocketed investor — he'd seen it all. In the end, it was safer to keep his circle of trust impossibly tight,

and that extended to the women in his life.

He enjoyed the flash of temper that she didn't try to hide and he suspected she would never tell him exactly what he wanted to hear, which was something everyone else did to varying degree. The saying, "It's lonely at the top" certainly applied to him, he thought with a momentary pinch of self-pity but then he realized what he was doing and chuckled at his own ridiculousness. Being filthy rich was fabulous. Staying in the best hotels, being assured of the most impeccable service, and never having to glance at a price tag was a luxury few were given. Where was this sudden flash of the

“Rich Man Blues” coming from? Besides, in a few short hours, he was going to be balls deep inside the most intriguing, most lovely woman he’d ever encountered — and the best part — she was all his.

Spirits lifted, he returned to his work, his mind already switching gears.

Even though the walls were cathedral-like, the air in the room seemed in short supply. Richard had dropped her off with her luggage at Boston's home — was home the right word for the massive structure? — and quickly deposited her into Boston's bedroom suite, which, honestly, looked like a small apartment, complete with a kitchenette.

“Boston wants you to wait for him here. Do not wander. The house is very large and you're likely to get lost. Stay put. You can watch television or read. There is a full library attached to

the bedroom, through that door.”

At the mention of the library, Julianna recalled Boston's admission that the last time he'd been in there, he'd been having sex, not reading and she tried to push the image away. “Thanks,” she murmured, caught by the insane desire to beg Richard to stay and keep her company even though the older man was hardly the companionable type. She watched Richard leave and then once she was closed into the room, she suddenly felt the overwhelming urge to run back from where she came. *Screw this*. But then Tom came to mind, lying helpless in that stupid, awful bed, wasting away from depression as much as his injury and she knew she would do

whatever it took to get Tom the help he needed.

Well, one thing was for certain, Boston Kincaid believed in surrounding himself with the finer things in life. She wasn't well-versed in priceless art but she was going to wager a guess that the stuff on the walls weren't Wal-Mart specials. Not exactly her cup of tea, though. As beautiful as everything was, there was an impersonal nature to it all. Honestly, not a single personal photograph? Her small apartment was crammed with candid pictures and fun mementos of good times with friends. It struck her as very sad until she realized what was happening and she rebelled. No, she refused to feel bad for the "poor

rich boy.” He was the enemy.

The enemy who was about to take her virginity, a small voice reminded her and she shivered.

He wasn't ugly, not that she was particularly swayed by looks, but he definitely had genetics on his side. She wandered to the bathroom and her eyes widened at the opulence. Egad. Surely that wasn't gold on the toilet? She hoped not. There was something wrong with a gold-plated toilet. Did he wipe his butt with dollar bills, too? She made a small sound of disgust and left the bathroom, knowing for certain she hoped a different bathroom was designated for her — one with a normal porcelain commode — but she had a sinking

feeling that Boston was going to want her in this room with him. Like playing a really messed up game of house.

The spa experience, at the very least, had been nice, up until it came time to wax her pubic area. Holy hell, now she knew why she'd never done that before. Talk about pain. But now, as instructed, she had a nearly bald pubic area, except for the "landing strip" as Boston had called it. Even though she'd never done the deed, she wasn't exactly naïve about sex. She'd fooled around with boyfriends but she'd wanted to save that one part of herself for the man she married. Right about now she was feeling pretty stupid for that decision because she'd basically sold her

virginity to a man she was fairly certain she despised. Julianna covered her face with her hands and fought the sudden wash of tears that sprang to her eyes for her situation. *Okay, get a grip. Let's get down to brass tacks...* even though she was losing something precious, she was gaining something, too. As much as she hated to give Boston credit for anything, he did have a point. How many women gave away their virginity for so much less?

True. So, looking at the situation logically, she could assume that a man like Boston Kincaid likely bores easily so after he's taken what he wants, after a week or so he'll probably turn her loose and she'll walk away one million

dollars richer and Tom will be in New Zealand, getting the care he needs.

It's all good. Yeah. So, why did she want to throw up?

She'd just gone to the bed to sit and calm down when the door opened and Boston walked in. She must've paled for Boston smirked and said, "Now, is that any way to greet the man who just made the impossible possible in your world?"

And then she knew she couldn't go through with this. No fucking way.

Boston hadn't expected the leap in his heartbeat the minute he opened the door and saw Julianna sitting on his bed, looking to his eyes like a beautiful present waiting for him to open, but there was no denying that she caused his heart to race. He was nearly consumed with the need to touch every inch of her skin and to possess everything she had to offer. Then he realized she was not wearing the lingerie he purchased for her. "Are you forgetting something?" he asked, his gaze flicking to the white box on the bed. "I would like to see you in my gift."

Julianna stood and in spite of the fire in her eyes, he caught the subtle tremble in her body as she declared, “I’ve made a mistake. I can’t go through with this. I’m sorry but I’m not cut out for this kind of thing. I know there are women out there who would jump at an opportunity to be your *beck-and-call girl* but I’m not that girl. I was wrong to accept and I know I signed a bunch of paperwork but...I just can’t.” Boston chuckled as he removed his jacket and tossed it to the French, ornate armchair that he personally despised, and began unbuttoning his shirt cuffs. When he didn’t immediately answer, she took a step away from him and said, “What are you doing? Didn’t you hear me? I can’t

do this. I'm sorry. Find someone else. Obviously, I will return the money. I'll find a way to help Tom on my own."

At that he arched his brow and stripped his shirt from his body. "Really? How industrious of you. Have you a spare \$300,000 lying around that I'm unaware?"

"Of course not," she said, scowling. "You know that."

"Yes, I do know that. I also know that you're late on your payment to Serene Hills, the managed care facility where your brother was moldering away in his hospital bed. How many late payments do they allow before they toss your brother on his broken ass?"

She blinked back tears, hatred in

her expressive eyes. “You’re a bastard. You already know the answers to the questions you’re asking.”

“Yes, I do. The answer is three. And you’re on No. 3. What’s the plan after they toss him out? Your apartment isn’t suitable for Tom’s wheelchair and your bedroom is much too small for the specialized hospital bed he needs. What’s your grand plan?”

“I don’t know!” she cried, tears appearing. “But I’ll figure something out. I just can’t do what you’re asking me to do.”

He tsked as if he felt true empathy for her situation but in truth, he was in ruthless mode and he’d do just about anything to keep her to her word.

He unbuttoned his trousers and let them fall, kicking them free. He took a seat on the bed and began to remove his socks. It did not escape his notice that her gaze had strayed to the bulge in his boxer briefs. He had nothing to hide and was pleased to note the sudden flush in her cheeks as she skewed her gaze sharply. “My sweet Julianna...stop fighting the inevitable. Your heart is your biggest strength and likely, your biggest handicap. You will do whatever it takes to help heal your brother because you love him so much. You’re a good little sister and you should be proud of your character. Is that what you need to hear so you can go forward without guilt?”

“It’s not guilt I feel,” she

retorted, wiping at her eyes. “It’s shame.”

“Shame? For what?” he asked, settling onto the bed, enjoying watching her even as she struggled. Everything about her intrigued him. “Women have been bartering the pussy for centuries. It’s really nothing new or worth getting worked up over.”

“Yes. Men have been coercing and manipulating women for a very long time but it doesn’t make it right.”

“That’s a matter of opinion I suppose. Seems right to me.” He shrugged with a negligent smile. “Now, enough with this nonsense and put on the lingerie.”

“Does anyone ever tell you no?”

“Not successfully.”

She exhaled a short breath of exasperation but he could tell she was wavering. He was an expert in reading people — a decided benefit in his position — and knew she was on the edge of capitulating. The key to any successful negotiation was to know the opponent’s weakness. Julianna’s weakness was embarrassingly easy to discern. “It’s a pity you’re reneging on the deal. At this moment, Tom is being readied for transport to the airport. His suite, compared to the one he’s currently staying in, looks as luxe as the Taj mahal. But I suppose I can cancel the order. However, I thought I should mention that I spoke with a doctor at

Stanford about your brother's injury and he said there's a window of opportunity that quickly closes for treatment. And Tom's window is rapidly closing."

"Tom's doctor never told us that," she said, chin lifted. "You're lying."

"Why would I lie? It makes no difference to me if your brother never walks again. Besides, why would your doctor dangle hope in front of you when he knows you'll never have access to the kind of treatment your brother would need? Seems unnecessarily cruel, if you ask me." He shifted and pulled his underwear off, tossing them to the floor, smiling when she gasped at seeing him completely nude with a rock-hard

erection eagerly springing into view. He palmed his cock and grinned. “Are we finished with the moral dilemma? If so, I’m ready to get this party started.”

A long moment stretched between them but Boston’s confidence never wavered. He knew she’d cave. She was too tender-hearted for her own good. He tried not to crow with triumph when Julianna dragged her feet to the edge of the bed and grabbed the box. “There’s a girl...” he murmured, pleased.

“I hate you,” she hissed, clutching the box to her chest. “For the rest of my days, I will hate you until I die for making me do this.”

“Duly noted.” His smile faded

and his tone hardened. “Now hurry up so I can fuck you.”

At that she quickly ran to the bathroom and slammed the door shut.

Boston ignored the sting of her words and focused on his victory. It didn't matter how she felt about him as long as he could feel her body beneath his. That's all that mattered, he reminded himself. That's. All. That. Mattered.

#

Julianna's heart nearly burst through her chest it was hammering so hard. How could one man be so insufferably cruel and yet devastatingly attractive at the same time? Even if Boston hadn't been obscenely wealthy, getting what he wanted would've been

his gift — and that included any woman. Her cheeks heated to the point of pain as she lifted the black corset from the box. How appropriate...black as sin. The moment she stepped into that cursed thing, she was agreeing to be Boston's sex slave for lack of a better way of putting it. There was no prettying up what was going on between them. But it was for a good cause, right? Maybe if she held onto that one simple truth it would shield her from the shameful agony staring her in the face. Julianna squeezed her eyes shut and blew a short breath to force herself to focus. *Put it on. Just do it.* Unless she was prepared to grab her things and walk out, she had no choice. And he knew it. For that

matter, he knew she wouldn't renege on the deal because there was more at stake than just her pride. Damn him for being a smug bastard. She slipped the corset on and adjusted it properly. Staring into the mirror she couldn't believe how sexual she appeared. Her hair, loose and free, fell in loose, soft golden waves down her back, and the pupils of her brown eyes seemed impossibly large. The bustier pushed her breasts up until they were practically overflowing the demi cups and she was dangerously close to having a wardrobe malfunction with a nip slip. She supposed that was the point — easy access. This is a biological process, she told herself sternly when her cheeks bloomed with pink. Not a big

deal. But as she glanced nervously at the door, knowing that a naked billionaire was no doubt stroking his cock while he waited, her knees shook.

“Should I come join you?” he asked from behind the door and she started.

“I-I’m coming,” she answered, licking her lips and fervently praying for divine intervention. An earthquake, a hurricane, a tornado...hell, even a *shark-nado* would be welcome at this point. But as the seconds ticked by with nothing happening, a tiny desperate sigh escaped her lips and she knew it was time to either get her butt out there and do the deed or put her clothes back on and get the hell out of there.

And there really wasn't a choice anyway.

Tom deserved the best care there was. If it weren't for her, he never would've been on that mountain and he never would've broken his back. She could do this for her brother.

Julianna emerged from the bathroom and Boston's gaze glazed over. Although he tried to hide it, he looked ready to devour her. When an answering thrill raced down her spine at the hunger she saw, she pushed it down, refusing to accept that Boston created a dark spiraling need inside her that defied all reason. "Come here," he instructed in a husky tone that made her shiver. She walked toward him, her breathing

shallow and fast. Julianna stopped at the side of the bed and avoided his groin area, not wanting to admit that the sight of his hardened erection, straining and beaded with moisture at the tip, intrigued her in a way that made a mockery of her protests. What did it say about her that she was aroused? He sensed her struggle and his expression softened. "My sweet Julianna, let me teach you how beautiful sex can be," he said, pulling her to the bed gently. He pressed her onto her back, against the sensual silk of the pillows and loomed above her. His cock nudged her pubic area, as if seeking her damp heat, and she bit her lip as tingles of anticipation threatened to obliterate her hatred for him. "You're the most

beautiful woman I've ever seen," he murmured, allowing his gaze to travel her body, returning to rest on the bountiful globes barely contained in the corset. "Your skin is unlike any I've ever touched." Julianna clenched her fists to prevent herself from reaching out to touch him, to explore his body as he was doing to her. He stopped and cocked his head, realizing she was stiff as a plank and rested his head on his hand, his ardor cooling. "Are you determined to hate my touch?" he asked.

Her eyes popped open. "Nowhere in the contract does it say I have to enjoy myself. Frankly, I'm surprised it matters to you."

"It matters."

Boston's expression gave her the chills. Had she offended him? "Why?"

"Because it does," he snapped, moving away from her to stalk to the small mini-bar tucked away in a corner near the kitchenette. His ass, two perfectly muscular halves of man-flesh made Julianna twist with something she didn't want to feel. Her insides felt slippery and aching while her female parts tingled with need. Julianna bit down on her tongue to remain silent. He hadn't paid for her acting skills and she wasn't about to start moaning and thrashing about for his benefit. What if it wasn't an act, a sly voice asked and she stubbornly pushed it away, not willing to even entertain the idea of enjoying sex

with the ruthless man. Boston poured himself something — whiskey or scotch, she wasn't sure — into a short glass and drank it quickly as if needing its liquid strength or patience and said, “I don't know why I'm so taken with you. By all accounts my all-encompassing desire for you defies logical thinking.” At that she frowned because if she wasn't mistaken, he'd just insulted her but before she could voice her opinion, he'd finished his second drink and had continued talking. “Honestly, you're not even my type.”

“You have a type?” she couldn't help but ask, curious in spite of her adamant decision to keep things at surface level between them. “Let me

guess...high society girls with tall, thin figures who eat a leaf of lettuce at lunch and claim they're full?"

At that a dark smile spread across his mouth. "Yes, actually."

"What do you like about that?" she asked, suddenly very conscious of the way her tummy pooched a little and how her thighs were plump. Hell, everything about her was plump. Julianna shifted against the threat of inadequacy that bobbed to the surface and wondered if there would ever come a day when she didn't wish she were taller or thinner. Arrgh! She wanted to love the way she felt in her skin but it was so hard when women were bombarded with impossible body

images splashed on every media outlet. “Well, maybe you should’ve picked one of your stick girls to play around with,” she said, realizing too late that she sounded like a jealous, insecure girl, so she tacked on, “I mean, if that’s what your thing is, you know? Seems to me you ought to go after it.”

“Oh, I am going after what I want,” he assured her with another smile that made her skin feel too tight on her bones. He pushed away from the bar and returned to the bed. She should’ve scooted to the other side but she was locked in place by forces that seemed to take control of her legs. Boston cupped her jaw and stared into her eyes. She could drown in that gaze if she weren’t

careful. How many hearts had he taken captive with his good looks and endless wealth? Would she become just another notch on his Italian leather belt? “You take my breath away...no woman has ever done what you do to me. The first time I saw you, I was mesmerized. I was determined to have you. I would allow nothing to stand in my way.”

“Not even my willingness?” she murmured, shivering against his touch.

“Not even that.” He dipped down to take her mouth, plundering it with such sweet brutality that she couldn't catch her breath. He tasted of alcohol and a darkness that threatened to swallow her whole if she wasn't careful. Within moments, he was

pressing her into the mattress with his body and she clung to him as he plundered her mouth as surely as he planned to penetrate her virgin body. And it was wildly intoxicating. His tongue dipped and swept through her mouth, while his hand traveled down the hard wire of the corset to palm her woman's mound. She gasped and groaned as he increased the pressure, creating a delicious, almost painful, pleasure that caused her hips to rise to meet his hand, desperately seeking more of the same. He tore the tiny panties from her body and within seconds his questing finger slipped between her dewed lips, penetrating that crazy heat and stoking it to an even bigger flame. Boston stroked

her insides, thrumming a secret spot against her vaginal wall that popped a groan from her mouth. Suddenly, he pushed hard and she cried out from the pinch of pain but he soothed her instantly, gentling his touch until she forgot about the pain. “So tight, my sweet Julianna...I’ll try not to hurt you,” he said in a low, husky tone that danced down her spine. The timbre of his voice wreaked havoc on her nerves and obliterated her last defense. She’d never felt overtly sexy but the way he touched her awakened a part of her that she’d squelched a long time ago. The binding of the corset rubbed against her sensitized nipples, igniting a deeper fire inside her and she gasped with the

power of her arousal but the shame of selling herself ran deeper than her pleasure and she pushed at his shoulders in a desperate bid to calm her raging hormones so she could think again. But he was wise to what she was trying to do and he wasn't going to let her. "Why do you fight something so good?" he asked, shocking her when he withdrew the finger embedded deeply inside her and sucked the juices free. "Ahhh, God girl, you're sweeter than candy."

"Ohh my God," she exclaimed, covering her face with her hands. "I can't believe you did that. How gross."

Boston pulled her hands free and pulled her hands up and over her head, his gaze stern. "Nothing we will do

together should disgust you. I will know every inch of your body and you will know mine. Do you understand?" She couldn't find her voice and bobbed a nod instead, though her face felt on fire. Pleased with her response, he lowered his head to her chest and nuzzled the deep valley between her breasts, inhaling the scent of her skin. "You smell like cookies and cream," he noted with faint amusement. "And I already know you taste just as delicious as you smell but I need more than that tiny nibble," he said as he released her hands and moved down her body, stopping at the vee of her thighs and she discerned his intent.

"Are you...?" He wasted no time

in parting her vaginal lips and she sucked in a wild breath, equal parts mortified and insanely aroused, and nearly screamed when his tongue buried itself between her folds, seeking that swollen bud that pulsed with need and want. “Ohhh! Oh God! No...yes! Oh...!” She couldn’t even form words. Boston buried his face deeper against her intimate flesh, suckling her clitoris and flicking it until she lost the ability to do anything but moan and thrash her head as something powerful built inside her. She’d masturbated before — so an orgasm wasn’t foreign to her — but goodness gracious, whatever was coming was far bigger than any pleasant tingles she’d wrought on her own. “B-

Boston!”

He increased his tempo and thrust his finger deep inside her, pushing against that sweet spot and within moments, she was slipping into the hardest orgasm she'd ever experienced — the kind she'd only read about. Toes-curling, body-clenching, mind-blowing, forget-your-name kind of orgasm and for a long moment she wasn't sure if she'd died because she couldn't hear or see — only feel.

Good God.

What the hell just happened to her? Julianna slowly came to her senses and found Boston, lips slicked with her juices, smiling smugly at her but his eyes were darkened with passion, looking much like a wolf eyeing his next meal. She swallowed, trying to catch her breath, but inexplicably, another wave began just as the last had begun to recede. Her eyes widened and she moaned as the pleasure buffeted her, this one slightly less violent than the first but definitely bigger than anything she'd given herself. The fact that he was watching her come, was an even bigger

turn-on than she ever imagined it would be in her most private fantasies but then again, her fantasies had been decidedly tame, she realized.

After a long moment, her muscles finally stopped contracting and she could breathe again, but her body felt wonderfully languorous and soft. She couldn't help the drowsy smile that found her lips and he couldn't resist dropping a kiss against her mouth. He smelled of her sex and, shockingly, she found that hot. "I like the way I smell on you," she admitted in a small voice.

"And I like the way you taste," he said, his gaze roaming her face as if committing it to memory. In this moment, she could almost forget how they came

together and why. But reality had a way of forcing itself through even the heaviest of curtains and she tried to prepare herself for what would come next. Perhaps he would be quick about it and the act wouldn't drag on. Would it be different if they were in love? Of course it would. She should be doing this with the man who was going to love her forever, not the man who'd bought her. But there was no turning back now. He seemed to sense her withdrawal and his expression changed. "You are a stubborn woman," he said, jerking at the strings on her corset to loosen it. She bit back a cry as the motion bruised tender skin. "But you will find I am even more so." He bared her breasts and tossed the

corset onto the floor. Julianna's nipples, pebbled into aching points, jutted from her full breasts like offerings and she hated that she wanted him to stuff them into his mouth. But he was no longer about foreplay or making the experience pleasurable for her. "On your hands and knees, Julianna," he ordered and when she was slow to obey, he quickly tossed her on her belly and pulled her hips toward him. Her ass was in the air, anchored by his strong grip and she was helpless to do anything but wait for that moment when he impaled her on his cock. A quiver of need started somewhere in her groin and she groaned in spite of the mortification. "Tell me you want me," he ordered. She bit her

lip to refuse. Wasn't it enough that he could wring such pleasure from her body? Did he have to grind the knowledge into her brain? "Tell me," he said in a harsh voice and she shuddered. Suddenly, he changed tactics and she was unprepared for the soft touch on the bare skin of her behind. "You have the sweetest ass, Julianna...a man could spend a lifetime staring at this view. But an ass like this is perfect for something else."

She stiffened and tried to rise but he pushed her back down. Was he going to...? *Oh, please no.* "Boston...please don't do that..."

"Do what sweetness?"

He was toying with her as

punishment for her disobedience. He ran his finger lightly down the crack of her bottom and she trembled wildly at the possibility of his invasion of her most private place. "Please don't..." was all she could say and he chuckled, ignoring her plea to gently push his finger between her cleft. "Boston!"

And suddenly, he was pressed against her, at her ear and her breath caught painfully in her chest. "Don't what? Don't fuck you in your ass? Oh, sweet girl, I can't make that promise. You have an ass made for fucking. Just the thought of pumping my cock into that tight hole is enough to make me come. You would deny me such a pleasure? Have you forgotten? You are my

purchased property, which means that sweet, tight ass belongs to me and I will fuck it at my leisure. *That's a promise*," he ended with the silky threat and she would've collapsed on the bed if it weren't for him holding her tightly. He reared back and she tensed, but instead of that cock splitting her backside as she feared, the soft, spongy flesh pressed against her core and rubbed at her clitoris, teasing it back to life, creating sparks of pleasure that promised to ignite with the right touch. Soon she was moaning again, pressing against him, eager to feel that blinding pleasure again. She was worse than a cat in heat. She had no shame. Hunger clawed at her as need began to spiral. He rubbed the

soft head of his cock against the tip of her clitoral hood and soon, she was desperate. The touch wasn't hitting the exact right spot but it was maddeningly close and she suspected that he knew it because he chuckled at her sounds of frustration. She gritted her teeth, knowing exactly what he wanted but should she give in? Hell, she couldn't stop herself. "Boston! I want you," she gasped giving in with a frustrated cry. "Please! Make me come again!"

"See? That wasn't so hard, was it?" he said with an approving smile. He replaced his cock with his fingers and pinched her pulsing clitoris between his thumb and forefinger, sending her into orbit. Stars exploded behind her eyes

and she lost all sense of time and place until suddenly, Boston was there — pushing himself slowly and inexorably into her hot, quivering sheath, until he was pressed tightly against her hymen. One quick thrust, a ripping pain, and he was balls deep inside her. But he didn't give her time to focus on the pain. He was already angling his cock so that it rubbed against her G-spot. With each thrust, the pain slowly receded, replaced by that deep, soul-born pleasure that vibrated throughout her entire body and she was once again keening and mewling like an animal in breeding season.

Embarrassment was an emotion for the rational mind — and rationality had long since fled.

All that remained was mind-blowing pleasure.

The bastard certainly knew how to make a woman forget who she was. Julianna gasped as another star burst behind her eyes and her muscles spasmed with rhythmic pleasure, lovingly milking his cock for every drop he had to give.

She would never be the same after Boston Kincaid.

Ever.

#

For one glorious moment, Boston's mind was totally devoid of conscious thought. His body was still ringing with the after effects of a mind-blowing orgasm and he was totally

spent. What an amazing ride. If he were an older man he would've been fearful for his heart for it'd nearly burst out of his chest, it was beating so hard. Julianna started to roll away from him and he stopped her. He hated that she wanted to get away from him, no matter that he'd just made her come several times over. Julianna stared with faint mistrust at his hand on her arm, tousled and plainly thoroughly fucked and his gut twisted. God, she was gorgeous but she hated him. "Where are you going?" he asked.

"The bathroom," she answered, pulling her arm free. "Are you okay with that?"

He released her. "I suppose.

Don't take all day. I'm not finished with you."

Julianna scurried to the bathroom and practically slammed the door. Boston winced at the sound and fell back against the pillows. Most women would've been licking his toes at this point but not Julianna. She was as stubborn as they came. Maybe that was part of her allure; she didn't do anything that he expected her to. He found her refreshingly irritating with her refusal to bow to him in anyway unless his tongue was in her pussy. That seemed the only way to bend her to his will. Not a bad way of doing things, he supposed. He loved the taste of her. He could smell her sex on his face and he wanted more.

But, he realized with a sigh, virgins needed time to recover. He knew it'd hurt when he'd ripped through her hymen. He'd felt her body stiffen and swallowed her tiny cry of pain. Perhaps he could make it up to her somehow. But as soon as the generous thought crossed his mind, he pushed it away. What did he care if she thought he was the devil? She'd signed on the dotted line and agreed to the deal so as long as she cooperated, he could give a shit as to her personal feelings about him. Besides, their acquaintance would end eventually and they'd both go on their merry ways and she could relegate him to the deepest, darkest place in her personal history and likely, he'd forget all about

her with time because let's face it, at the end of the day, after a woman had served her purpose and no longer interested him, he could barely remember her name.

How does that bullshit taste? A voice mocked silently and he scowled though he knew the voice had only been in his head. There'd been a time when he'd been an idealistic romantic but that was so long ago he barely remembered how it felt to believe in true love and all that crap.

Boston climbed from the bed and strode to the kitchenette, where he pulled a water from the small refrigerator. After guzzling it down, he grabbed another for Julianna. Don't want to get

dehydrated, he thought with a lascivious smile. Oh, the things he wanted to do to her. Dirty things. He wanted to defile her body in so many ways that she never once forgot who had obliterated her virginity. If he could, he would tattoo his name across her pussy so she could never escape his possession of her. Damn, he should've put that in the paperwork. He rather liked the idea of having his ownership on her permanently. Maybe he could renegotiate.

At that he smiled with delight but even as his cock was ready to play again, there remained that annoying voice at the back of his mind that tugged at something from his past, dragging it

out from the depths of its locked box to throw at his feet. He'd once loved so deeply that he'd nearly lost himself when the relationship had crumbled to dust.

He swore he'd never give his heart to another woman to break.

Ever.

But his cock? That he'd gleefully give to Julianna over and over and over...

Julianna stared at her nude body in the mirror, shocked at how easily Boston had turned her inside out with his touch. The things he'd done to her...and the way she'd responded...she squeezed her eyes shut to avoid seeing the stain of embarrassment spread across her cheeks. She'd been as wild as a harlot and just as shameless. Her breasts appeared bigger and the nipples were reddened from the corset and moisture dribbled from between her thighs. She knew what dripped from her core — his seed — and she quickly grabbed a towel and began wiping it away. They hadn't

actually discussed protection and she'd assumed that he would use a condom. Julianna scrubbed at her skin but the damage was done. His seed was deep inside her and if one of those industrious swimmers found its mark, she'd end up pregnant. What had he been thinking? Maybe he hadn't been. Maybe he didn't care. Maybe he had scores of bastards running around in the world and he didn't give a lick because all he had to do was write a check to make them go away. Well, she didn't want to be tied to him any longer than required and that certainly included getting pregnant by him.

They'd have to have a talk immediately because she refused to have

sex with him again without protection.
End of story.

She winced as her insides twinged, an instant reminder of how thoroughly she'd been fucked and she hated that she'd loved it. Sex was pleasurable — her body didn't know the difference between Boston's cock and another man's. But there was no denying that Boston knew his way around a woman's body. He was damn near masterful. Well, practice made perfect, so they say, and Boston had likely had plenty of it.

Julianna rinsed and dried her face and then grabbing the robe hanging on the door and quickly putting it on, she returned to the bedroom.

Boston initially frowned when he saw the robe but he allowed her to remain robed, for which she was grateful. She climbed onto the bed, keeping as much distance as possible between them but accepted the water bottle he handed her. He regarded her with smoldering heat that made him appear sexy and dangerous — a combination that did terrible things to her resolve — but he surprised her when instead of reaching for her, he began talking instead. “I’ve arranged for a Skype session for you and your brother once he gets settled in New Zealand. I would imagine he has many questions for you. Of course, you will tell him nothing of our arrangement. I don’t care

how you frame our relationship as long as you keep the details of it private. I'm sure you can imagine how if word got out, it could look bad for me."

A wry smile found her lips. "You mean, extorting sexual favors from a woman would be a blight on your reputation? Shocking."

"Yes, well, let's just say, it would be very inconvenient to have to explain and I have no wish to do that. Besides, what inconveniences me will spell ruin for you. For both our sakes... keep it clean." Ironic that he was instructing her on keeping things clean when he'd just done incredibly filthy things to her. He must've recognized the irony as well for he smiled before

adding, “I know you’ll do what’s best because you’ve already demonstrated you’re a pragmatic woman.”

She supposed he was right. “I will keep the story vague and PG. How’s that?”

“Excellent.” He paused a moment as if considering how to phrase his next question, then asked, “How are you feeling? Any residual pain?”

“Please don’t pretend that my welfare is of your concern,” she said coolly. “I’m fine.”

Perhaps she should’ve been less cold. Suddenly, any hint of warmth fled and he said, “Do not confuse my query with concern for your welfare. I only inquired to determine how quickly we

could fuck again. But if you're ready to go, then so am I." To prove his point, he palmed his quickly plumping erection and smiled. "Off with the robe."

"Wait," she said, tucking the robe around her more tightly as she prepared to stand her ground. "We have a problem that has to be addressed immediately before we do anything else."

"And what would that be?" he asked, irritated.

"You didn't use a condom," she answered. "And I have no interest in getting pregnant with any child of yours."

He narrowed his gaze but a smile pulled at the corner of his mouth as he

said, “If this were truly a concern, perhaps you should’ve mentioned it before I came inside you.”

“I wasn’t thinking,” she admitted, mortified to acknowledge her own stupidity. “But I’m thinking now and we have to take precautions. I mean, I’m sure you’re not interested in fatherhood any more than I’m looking to be your baby mama.”

His expression inexplicably shuttered and he climbed from the bed as he said, “You’re correct. Fatherhood doesn’t appeal to me but you needn’t worry. I can’t father children.”

“Why not?”

“Because I suffered a debilitating injury in my youth and now

I'm sterile. Are you sufficiently relieved that I won't ruin your life with *any child of mine?*”

It was the way he said it that made her pause. It was as if he'd been truly hurt that she would say such a thing, which was baffling. What did he care what she thought? And, yes, she was relieved. However, as she slowly allowed the robe to fall from her shoulders, and as he loomed above her, hungry and ready, his dark eyes piercing her soul before his head dipped down and his mouth greedily sucked at her hardened nipples, she thought — ever so briefly — what a terrible tragedy for someone like Boston.

Her last thought before

succumbing to his touch...his babies would be beautiful.

#

Boston forced himself to leave so that Julianna and her brother Tom could have a private moment to chat but he was disconcerted by his desire to stay. He told himself it was only because he wanted to be sure that Julianna kept her end of the bargain and left out any mention of their private arrangement but in truth, he simply wanted to be with Julianna. Thankfully, he was glad for the work that pulled him away because without it, he might've found a reason to hang around.

But too soon the work was done and he was left to his own thoughts

again. And those thoughts went unerringly straight to Julianna. He called Richard in and seconds later Richard appeared, closing the door softly behind him as usual. “Yes, Sir?” he asked.

“Is the background check finished on Julianna?” Boston asked.

“Of course. The finished report will be on your desk tonight.”

He grunted his approval but he wanted to know what was in that report now. “Give me the highlights. I need to know more about her.”

“Shall I start with her birth or should I skip to the college years?” Richard asked with a disapproving tone that Boston found annoying, only because he knew Richard was probably

right that he was going overboard.

“College years will suffice.”

“Good student, dropped out of college to care for her brother Tom after a skiing accident in Vale. Apparently, Julianna was there with Tom when it occurred. They were there on winter break and Tom took a tumble but help wasn’t immediately available because they went off trail and it took a while to find them. The delay in treatment might account for his inability to walk now.”

Boston nodded with interest. That may account for the guilt she obviously felt. “Perhaps it was her idea to go off the trail?” he surmised mostly to himself. He motioned for Richard to continue. “What about her parents?”

“Dead. It is only Julianna and her brother Tom. They are very close.”

“What was she studying?”

“Undeclared. She was still satisfying her general education requirements when the accident occurred but the arts seemed to be of interest to her, according to her guidance counselor.”

Boston raised an eyebrow at Richard, impressed that he'd managed to ferret out information from a confidential source. “Anything else?”

“And leave nothing for your reading pleasure tonight? Those are the highlights.”

“Very well. No boyfriend lurking in the wings?”

“None that I could find. Nothing serious.”

That pleased him. “Excellent. I wouldn’t want to have any unfortunate altercations with other guys. That means she’s all mine,” he murmured, wanting to go home immediately. Richard’s expression made him realize he was acting out of character again and he straightened. “Good work. That will be all,” he said, dismissing him.

Richard paused at the door, turning to say, “I need to say something...”

“Are you going to say something that will piss me off?”

“More than likely.”

Boston exhaled sharply and

motioned for Richard to continue. “Go on, get it over with.”

“I’ve been with this family for a very long time. Long enough to see you change over the years.” Boston didn’t like the direction of Richard’s point but out of respect for the older man, he allowed him to keep talking. “Ever since GiGi did what she done to you—“

“I don’t want to talk about GiGi. That’s part of the past that I don’t even think about anymore.”

“That’s horseshit and you know it.”

Startled, Boston stared at his long-time, right-hand-man. Recovering, he narrowed his gaze in warning. “Careful...you’re treading on dangerous

ground.”

“I know that. But I’ve been watching you self-destruct for a long time and it’s finally gotten to the point where you’re out of control. What are you planning to do that poor girl? She’s not the one you’re angry with — you’re angry with GiGi. Take it up with her. Not Julianna. She’s a sweet kid.”

“She’s no kid,” Boston growled. “And since when are you her champion? You hardly know her.”

“True. But I see how you are with her and I think she’s different. I think she makes you feel different and that scares you. Anything that scares you, you beat into the ground. I don’t want that to happen to her. What can I say, I

have a soft spot for the girl.”

“Keep your soft spot to yourself. She’s mine.”

“Calm down. I’m old enough to be her father. I’m saying this for your benefit. You used to be a good man, Boston. But it’s been a while since I can say that.”

“Where’s this coming from?”

“You know...I think it’s when I heard myself giving the poor girl some crappy advice.”

“Which was?”

“I told her to do whatever you asked her to do, no matter her feelings about it. That was plain wrong. Her feelings matter and a long time ago, I wouldn’t have had to tell you that.”

Yeah, that was true but that man was long gone. The fact that Richard was trying to resurrect him was a sign that maybe Richard needed to retire.

“Julianna will be pleased to know she has such an ardent champion,” Boston said, leaning back in his chair. “Is that all?”

Displeased with Boston’s lack of acknowledgment, Richard’s mouth firmed into a tight line and he shook his head. “Stubborn as your old man but at least he had the sense to admit when he was wrong.”

“Yes, well, we all have our faults.” Boston flicked at a piece of lint on the felt on his desk and fixed his employee with a hard stare. “Here’s the

deal...Julianna isn't your concern. But to ease your conscience, she's a consenting adult who is being fairly compensated for any *inconvenience* our relationship may cause. And contrary to what you may think...I'm not a monster."

"No, you're not a monster, but you can be a real asshole. I've seen you in action when you're determined to grind someone into the ground. I'm afraid that you're going to break her spirit because she's the type who will never bow down to someone like you. Ever."

Richard's frank opinion rang with truth and Boston couldn't deny it. There was strength to Julianna but he could break her if he wasn't careful and

he had no wish to break her. At least not yet.

“You’ve been a loyal employee for many years,” he stated. “So I’ll forgive your momentary lapse in reason. But don’t make a habit of it or else you’ll find yourself working for someone else.”

Richard laughed at him, saying, “You forget yourself, son. I work for you because I choose to. Keep it up and I’ll walk on my own. I’ve said my piece. It’s up to you what you do with it. One final thing,” he said, going to the door. “What do you think your father would’ve thought of your little arrangement with Julianna? I’ll leave you with that thought. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

Boston opened his mouth but Richard had already closed the door behind him. The thing was, Boston knew in his heart of hearts that he'd never truly fire Richard. He'd been his father's best friend and Boston had known Richard his entire life. If anyone knew Boston, it was Richard and there was no denying that truth.

But he was still pissed because no one liked to hear when they were screwing up. Not even if they deserved it.

Richard was right, he'd been punishing other people for what GiGi had done for a long time. Didn't feel good to have that truth pushed in his face.

But he wasn't about to let Julianna go. And he didn't care what he had to do to hold onto her.

Good God...he realized with a laugh. He was officially an asshole *and* a jealous-obsessive type.

Well, he'd never been one for labels anyway.

He wanted her. That's it. He'd deal with the why later.

“I still don’t understand...how did you make this happen?” Tom asked from the Skype screen, the quality of the feed a little glitchy due to the distance between California and New Zealand. “I mean, I’m not complaining, this place is off the chain but...it’s gotta be pretty expensive.”

Julianna bit back surprisingly happy tears for her brother. “The insurance came through,” she lied through her teeth. “I had to really go after it but when they realized I wasn’t going to give up, they gave in and approved the facility.”

“It’s funny, how did you even hear about this place? And why didn’t you mention it before? I could’ve at least helped with the paperwork. You shouldn’t have to take on the lion’s share of all the work.”

“It’s no trouble. I wanted to do it. And now it’s done so all’s well that ends well. Stop worrying and start focusing on healing that spinal injury. I want you back on those slopes as soon as possible so I can finally beat you fair and square.”

“Yeah, I’m not sure I’ll be strapping on skis anytime soon,” Tom said and Julianna’s heart nearly broke for his quiet pain. Tom had been such an athletic guy, that to be sidelined like this

was a cruelty beyond words. “But hey, you never know. Maybe this place can work a miracle, right?” he added in an attempt to lighten the conversation. She nodded. *Please God...grant us a miracle.* Tom paused then said, “Thanks Sis...I really appreciate what you’ve done for me. Not many people would’ve put their life on hold for a broken brother.”

Julianna nearly choked as she said, “Well, most people don’t have an awesome brother like I do.” She wiped at her tears and smiled. “Okay, enough of this crybaby stuff. You do everything they tell you to do and no wimping out, okay? If I hear you’re not doing the PT, I’m going to find a way to fly to New

Zealand and kick your ass, wheelchair or not.”

He pretended to be horrified. “You would hit a cripple?”

“No, but I would punch a brother if he deserved it.”

“Fair enough.” It was then Tom realized he didn’t recognize her surroundings and he frowned as he tried to peer past her. “Where are you?”

“Oh...um, a friend’s house.”

“Who?”

“You don’t know him.”

“Try me. I know a lot of people.”

She graced her big brother with an indulgent smile. “Trust me, you don’t know him.”

“Is this a boyfriend?”

“No,” she answered quickly but covered with an excuse to get off Skype. “I’m so glad you’re settled but I have to get going. I have to work tonight and I need to do laundry still.”

“Always pushing things to the last minute,” Tom said, shaking his head. “Okay, I’ll talk to you tomorrow. Same time?”

“Yeah,” she agreed, loving how Tom seemed back to his old self rather than the depressed young man he’d become after his diagnosis. “Love you, Tom-Tom.”

“Love you, too, June Bug.”

They disconnected and as soon as the screen went dark Julianna allowed herself the tears she’d held

back. What an amazing opportunity for Tom. She was so happy for him and grateful, even if she hated lying to him about how she'd made it happen. Maybe someday she'd tell him but for now, it was better to keep it private. Plus, Julianna knew she'd need some distance between now and telling the whole story before she could tell it without dying from shame. She wiped at her tears and turned to find Boston standing in the doorway, watching her. Julianna gasped, hating that he saw her private moment. "You need a bell or something," she grumbled. "What are you doing?"

Instead of answering, he pushed off the doorframe and took a seat in the loveseat near the giant bedroom

window. “Come sit with me,” he said.

“Where?” she asked.

He patted his lap. “Right here.”

A subtle thrill danced up her spine at his instruction but she squelched it. “I’d prefer not.”

“It wasn’t a suggestion.”

“Are you always going to boss me around?”

“Are you always going to question me?” *Well, that answered that question.* Realizing she would not win, she sighed and reluctantly climbed into his lap. He wrapped his arms around her and for a moment she had to admit, being held this way felt pretty nice. His solid strength was an unexpected balm to her ragged nerves and his scent soothed her

even though she tried to deny the warm tingling feeling spreading in her groin. Satisfied, he pressed a soft kiss to her temple, almost tenderly and she didn't know what to think of this different side of Boston Kincaid. She gazed at him warily, causing him to say with a sigh, "Relax, Julianna."

"It's hard to relax around you," she admitted. "You make me feel things I don't want to feel."

"Such as?"

"Such as things that have no business happening between you and me."

"And why is that?"

"Because of the reality of our relationship."

“Why are you so ashamed? It’s not a big deal.”

“It’s a big deal to me.”

He exhaled a long breath as if annoyed but kept further comment to himself on that score. Instead, he asked about her brother and Julianna found herself answering even though she’d privately vowed to keep Boston out of her business as much as possible. “He’s good. More than good, he said the place is amazing. The therapy they have planned is...well, out of this world. Almost something out of a sci-fi movie. Why don’t they offer those kinds of therapies here in the States?”

Boston shrugged. “Probably has something to do with insurance

companies and what they're willing to pay for. For most people, this kind of treatment is just out of their reach.”

She tucked her lip under her teeth. Most people, which included her. If it weren't for Boston...the truth was that Tom likely would've never walked again. There were no guarantees but at least now he had a fighting chance. “I feel as if I should thank you but then I get angry because it's not as if you did what you did out of the kindness of your heart. But still...thank you.” She'd expected the words to cut like glass coming out of her mouth but they came out more easily than she would've imagined. Her gratitude softened the moment between them and Boston snagged her chin to pull

her gently to him. He brushed a featherlight kiss against her mouth and her heartrate sped up a notch in anticipation. "I like seeing you smile," he murmured against her mouth. Before she had a chance to respond, he deepened the kiss, teasing her mouth with his tongue, coaxing her own response. Fire spread through her veins, igniting the banked passion lurking in her body, and within moments she was helping Boston peel her clothes from her body. Fully nude, she straddled him in the chair, marveling with silent awe the way their bodies fit together. His gaze darkened with lust as his hands closed around her breasts, drawing her closer to suck a tightened nipple into his mouth.

A purr escaped from her lips as she fell forward, feeding more of her breast into his mouth. He groaned against her skin and her core heated and slicked, ready for his cock. She didn't care at the moment how they came together. All that mattered was Boston's touch and how it made her squirm. She shimmied from his lap and knelt beside him, helping him unbuckle his pants. As soon as his cock sprang free from his silk boxers, she sucked that ready length down her throat. There was something so primal and raw about accepting a cock into her mouth. A thrill of sexual awareness tripled her heartrate as her efforts popped a moan from Boston's mouth. There was a heady sense of power to have him so

vulnerable and in her control. His hips lifted in subtle thrusts in time with her actions and his skin became clammy as she worked him.

“Oh God, Julianna...” he cried, tensing as the orgasm clenched him in a breathless grip. This time she was prepared and when he came, filling her mouth in great, warm, salty spurts, she was ready and greedily swallowed every drop, milking his cock until he shuddered and collapsed in a boneless heap against the chair. Julianna surreptitiously wiped her mouth and allowed a smile. Good gravy, he was hot. Even more so to her eyes than ever before, which was probably dangerous. Boston’s chest heaved with the force of

his harsh breathing as he recovered, but he motioned for her to join him. She straddled him again, settling her hot core against his dribbling but spent cock, and wiggled her hips a little to tease the sensitive head. Boston cocked his head as if to say, *Oh yeah?* and he pulled her to him to kiss her deeply. She met his tongue with her own, tangling and dancing, loving how dirty it felt to be kissing after what she'd just done. She supposed it was similar to when he kissed her after going down on her. She liked the smell of herself on him and wondered if he liked knowing his seed had just been in her mouth. Boston angled his hips and slowly impaled her on his length. She sucked a wild breath

as it seemed his cock filled her entire body, but instead of pain, nothing but pleasure followed. She shuddered as she rocked against him, rubbing herself against his hard length, moaning with frustration as her aching clitoris pulsed with need. But Boston's wet fingers were soon touching, pinching and teasing that hungry nub as she worked her hips against the root of his cock and within moments a keening wail burst from her lips as an orgasm ripped through her pelvis, clenching muscles in a beautiful rhythm of pleasure and wild sweetness. "*B-Boston...oh God...Boston...*" his name trailed on her lips as she struggled to catch her breath, falling forward as she lost the strength to remain upright.

“Swivel around, my Julianna,” he whispered and she lifted herself clumsily, swiveling on his cock so that she faced the wall and he had a perfect view of her backside. She blushed and glanced back at him, a bit embarrassed, but the hunger and desire in his stare was sexier than anything she’d ever seen. That she’d brought him to this level of lust was shockingly erotic and something she’d never imagined would turn her crank in such a visceral way. She braced herself with the arms of the chair and Boston began to drill her pussy with hard, deep thrusts. At this angle, the head of his cock hit her G spot with unerring accuracy and she shuddered, gasping as another orgasm, one that was

deeper and more all-encompassing than the explosive spark of a clitoral orgasm began to build and it was all she could do to hold on for dear life.

“Tell me you love my cock,” he demanded, his voice tight and strained. “Tell me how much you love being fucked by me and only me.”

God, yes. At that moment she would've agreed to anything he asked and her mouth began to move in senseless babble. “Yes! Yes Boston, I love being fucked by you!” She squeezed her eyes shut, nearly delirious from the pleasure as it cascaded through her body in huge waves, drowning her in sensual sensation until she was only partially aware of Boston's thrusts and the

guttural cry that erupted from his mouth as he came. She collapsed against him and his spent cock fell from her dripping channel and for a long moment all they did was breathe. Sweat drying on their bodies, Julianna realized that in that moment, she felt content. She knew all the reasons why she shouldn't but maybe it was all those endorphins rushing her cerebral cortex and when she came down from her orgasmic high she'd remember all the reasons why she hated Boston Kincair but at the moment...she kinda wanted to sleep.

“You are unlike any woman I've ever known,” came Boston's voice from behind her, tickling her ear and causing her to shiver. His hand lightly caressed

her bare skin and she wondered at how easily he made her quake. “Tell me why you waited to have sex? Was it religious?”

“No,” she answered, hesitating for a brief moment as she considered whether or not she wanted to bare her private reasons for remaining a virgin. She supposed it was a moot point now. “I wanted it to be special. I watched my girlfriends flit from boy to boy, having casual and not-so-casual sex and it meant nothing. And then, by proxy, the girls ended meaning nothing. I didn’t want to be devalued that way. I figured that if I waited until I was married to have sex, then at least I knew without a doubt, the man loved me enough to wait,

which meant he valued me for more than just sex.”

“Hmm...”

Hmmm? That's it? She twisted in his lap to stare at him. “I just bared my soul to you and shared something incredibly private and all you can say is *hmmm?*”

He frowned. “What else should I say? I could point out the irony of your situation but that seems unnecessarily mean given the nice romp we just had.”

Nice romp? Ugh. She scowled. “You really know how to ruin a moment,” she muttered and popped from his lap. “For a brief nanosecond, I wondered if it were possible for you to be a decent human being but then you

went and destroyed that tiny little spark of wonder and I guess I should thank you. At least now I know that I should never allow myself the misfortune of falling in love with you because I'd end up screwed in more ways than one.”

“Falling in love with me would definitely be unwise. I am not interested in your heart, only your body. But rest assured that I am quite pleased with your body and I definitely look forward to more sessions like this.”

Julianna stomped her foot and glared. “I hate you.”

“Hateful sex can be very dirty — in a very good way. Come, let me show you how wonderful sex can be between two people who can't stand one

another.”

Julianna would rather chew nails than allow him into her body again *tonight*. Tomorrow, admittedly, might be a different story. She rather liked those toe-curling orgasms. She grabbed her bathrobe and pulled it on, saying, “I’d rather not. I’m going to shower. Feel free to be gone by the time I’m finished.”

He chuckled and popped to his feet, catching her just as she reached the bathroom door. Boston’s strong grip enclosed her waist and he buried his nose against the tender skin of her neck to whisper, “You’re so cute when you’re pissed off.” *Oh, is that right? Well, let’s see how cute this is.* She buried an elbow into his chiseled midsection and

he grunted as he let go.

Julianna lifted her chin and hit him with a hard glare. “I know self-defense and I’m not afraid to use it. Try that again and I’ll send your spleen into your lower intestines.”

She expected anger, even rage but he simply waved her off and sank back into the chair with a subtle quirk of his lips that suggested a wry smile. “Enjoy your shower, Madame,” he said and she spun on her heel, slamming the door behind her. And once the door was safely locked, she yelled out, “And this is the ugliest bathroom I’ve ever seen! Gold? Ugh. Apparently, you and Liberace share the same interior designer. Tacky!”

“This coming from the woman who was using coffee filters for toilet paper?” he answered from the other room and she gasped. How’d he know that? In spite of everything, a tiny giggle escaped and she turned the water on full blast. Well, at least the water pressure was decent.

She supposed there was a silver lining to every bad situation.

Boston listened to the shower running and considered joining Julianna but his aching mid-section cautioned him to cool his jets or else he might lose something precious. She seemed very upset that he'd been so flippant about her sharing of something private.

The truth was her answer had struck an unwelcome chord and his first line of defense was to always shut down anything or anyone who came too close for comfort.

But he didn't want to push away Julianna. He enjoyed her spark, her feisty temper, even her scathing

treatment. It was refreshing. And more than that — he craved spending time with Julianna.

It wasn't that she was beautiful, even though she was, his fascination went further than something surface-deep. He may have made light of her sacrifice to her brother, but he was charmed by the fact that she was, indeed, so loving at her core. She was the kind of person who would gladly sacrifice for her loved ones and yet, she was no pushover. What an enigma.

She was nothing like Gigi.

Gigi had been coldly gorgeous, a glittering frost princess who'd reached into his heart and ripped it out when he least expected it.

He still remembered the killing blow — what a sap he was at the time.

“I can’t wait to be your wife,” Gigi had said, smiling as she admired the newest piece of jewelry he’d picked up for her. Gigi loved sparkling things and Boston loved Gigi, hence the truckload of pricey trinkets she already had. Gigi gave Boston her cheek and giggled when he frowned. “Oh fine,” she relented and sank into his arms. “I suppose for a five carat pretty, you can do whatever you like with me.”

Boston settled her into his lap and wondered if there was a happier man on earth than him. There was only one small thing he had to talk to Gigi about and he figured he might as well get

it over with.

“Babe, I have something to tell you and I hope you’re okay with it.”

Gigi turned mock serious and said, “If you’re about to ask me if you can bring another woman into our bed, I’ll tell you...only if I get to choose.” She giggled at his shocked expression and nibbled on his earlobe. “You’re such a sweet boy. I don’t mind a threesome now and then.”

Just the mention of such a dirty adventure caused his cock to harden instantly and Gigi knew it. She wiggled her sweet ass against the hard ridge of his cock and laughed. “Looks like someone likes that idea.”

He chuckled and was tempted to

follow up on that offer but he knew he had to get this out of the way before they started anything remotely fun. “I wish that were the reason I needed to talk. Honestly, I wouldn’t even be bringing this up but my dad thinks I should let you know.”

At the mention of the older Kincaid, Gigi lost her smile. His old man didn’t particularly like Gigi and hadn’t been all that quiet about it. “Great, what’s Papa Bear going on about now? I swear that man has it out for me. Why can’t he just accept that we’re in love?”

“Exactly! That’s what I said. And then he said that what I have to tell you might change that.”

“Oh please. Nothing is going to change the fact that you’re my sweetheart. I promise,” she assured him but he would’ve felt more secure if she’d made her declaration while looking him in the eye instead of staring at her newest bauble. “So what’d the old blowhard say?”

Boston let the casual insult to his father slide, knowing now was not the time to chastise her. He drew a breath and just put it out there to get it over with. “Okay, here’s the thing...I can’t have kids. In this day and age, it doesn’t seem like a big deal when there are so many other options out there for adoption but for me, unfortunately, I can’t father children.”

She stilled and he didn't begrudge her reaction because frankly, it was a bit of a bomb to drop on someone you planned to marry but the longer the silence stretched on, the more nervous he became. "You never mentioned this before," she said.

"It's not something you whip out when you're casually dating and you have to admit that things have moved pretty fast for us. I was too busy falling in love with you, I guess." Her faint smile didn't reach her eyes and he began to sweat that he was going to lose her over something that was out of his control. He kept talking in the hopes of smoothing the sudden, tiny wrinkles appearing in her forehead. "It was an

accident when I was a kid. Doc says I killed my baby-makers,” he said, trying to joke but she wasn’t laughing and he knew he had to do some damage control. “We can adopt if you are set on being a mom. There are plenty of kids—“

“Boston, why would I want to adopt? I thought my children would have *your* DNA, not a stranger’s.”

“Does it matter all that much?”

She slid from his lap and immediately put distance between them. Her voice was cold as she snapped, “Of course it matters.”

Baffled and hurt, he asked, “Why?” and climbed from the chair. “Jesus, Gigi, what difference does it make if you love me?”

She glared, her eyes suddenly glittering. “Because it means I’ve been wasting my Goddamn time watching my ovulation and tracking my damn period when all this time you’ve been shooting blanks!”

Stunned, all he could do was stare. “What the hell are you talking about? You were *trying* to get pregnant?”

“Yes, I was trying to get pregnant, you idiot.”

“Why?”

“Because a kid would’ve gotten me more money.”

Ah fuck. His world began to shatter as she grabbed her purse and keys. Gone was the sweet, playful

woman he'd fallen head over heels in love with in a very short time frame, replaced by a cold, angry, and cruel bitch. "Here's the thing...your daddy would've insisted on the prenup, which means I would get nothing when I dumped your ass. But if I had your kid, that's an insurance policy for eighteen years. Now, you tell me that I've been wasting my time, laughing at your stupid jokes and suffering your touch, for nothing? And to think...if I hadn't been wasting my time with your sorry ass, I could've gotten my hands on one of those Buchanan boys. Now those are real men."

Suffering his touch? Rage began to percolate and boil. *Suffering?* In a

move that shocked her, Boston shoved her up against the wall and pushed hard into her face, coming so close his breath lifted the tendrils of hair framing her jaw. “Suffering my touch? Is that so? I don’t recall you complaining when I was fucking you. But then maybe it was hard to tell from all the moaning you were doing.”

“What can I say? I’m a great actress,” she hissed and Boston’s hand flew up but he pulled back seconds before connecting with her lying face. He pushed away from her, disgusted and heart-broken. “Get the fuck out of here before I do something I regret.”

“I dare you to hit me. I’ll own you.”

“Get out.” She was just to the door when he turned and added with a sneer, “And honey, you overestimate your appeal. The Buchanans would’ve fucked you raw and then sent you on your way without even remembering your name. I’ve seen it happen a million times. It was my bad luck that you landed in my world instead.”

“That makes two of us,” she countered with an angry glitter. “Thanks for nothing, asshole.”

And when Gigi left — which later he learned wasn’t even her real name — she drop kicked his heart through the open door.

Painful as it’d been, he learned a powerful lesson — women couldn’t be

trusted.

And always do a background check.

#

Julianna exited the bathroom and found the room empty. A small frown followed as she realized she'd expected Boston to be there waiting for her. Good, she told herself. She needed some alone time. She quickly dressed and decided to take a stroll around this monstrosity of a house. It was like living in an European castle, or at the very least a hotel. All of this for one man? Seemed excessive. Why did wealthy people have to live in such big houses? A modest three-bedroom wasn't enough? She descended the marble

staircase to the first level and her steps echoed off the gleaming floors. She shivered and realized maybe she ought to have grabbed a blanket to tuck around herself because this place was cold. *Pretty flowers*, she noted as she passed a huge fresh spray of mind-bogglingly beautiful flowers. Probably had them delivered every day and never even noticed them. She actually preferred plants to flowers because plants didn't die within three days. Well, most plants. She had a bit of a black thumb but not from lack of trying. Finally, her brother Tom made her promise to do the plants a favor and stop buying them because the minute she placed them in her cart, she was dooming them to certain death.

She heard a subtle, muffled noise and she followed it to another cavernous hall that branched into another room. A very manly room. Stag heads and other dead animal heads hung from the wall and she grimaced at the macabre custom.

“Are you lost?” Boston’s voice asked from behind a huge chair. He swiveled around and his mouth turned up in a cool smile at her entrance. “What are you doing wandering about? Haven’t you been warned that you could get lost in this big house?”

“I was bored. You can’t keep me caged in a room. That wasn’t part of the deal.”

“Wasn’t it?”

She glared. “No.”

Boston shrugged. “Damn, I should’ve been more specific in the agreement you signed.”

She ignored his odd mood and wandered the room, taking in the dark paneling and the thick bearskin rug sprawled out in front of the massive fireplace. “This place is unreal. Very old world. Was your dad a medieval lord?” At that he laughed and poured himself a drink, which by the looks of it, wasn’t his first. She gestured to the alcohol. “What’s wrong with you? I took a shower and came out and you were gone and now I find your drowning your sorrows in booze. What’d I miss?”

He waved away her question and pointed at the elk staring with glass eyes

straight at her. “You see that? My dad shot it with one shot. He was quite the marksman. He never took shortcuts and he always got what he was after. Gotta admire a man like that.”

“I have different views of killing defenseless animals.”

“Of course you do,” he said with a sigh as if weary of her constant chattering about her ideals and morals. “Well, if it assuages your conscience, we always ate what he killed. Elk steaks are quite delicious.”

“I’ll take your word for it.” She walked to the fine, mahogany desk and ran her fingers along the shiny grain. “Your dad liked to spend a lot of time in here?”

“When he could. It was his haven. I spent many happy moments in here in my childhood.”

“So if this place is filled with happy memories, why the sour face?” Did she want to know? Maybe it wasn’t wise to poke at his personal problems but yeah, she did want to know. There was a sadness to him that tugged at her in a way that defied explanation. Hell, maybe she was just bored and needed something to distract her. Yeah, that was it. “I mean, what could possibly be going so wrong in your life? You have everything you ever could want.”

“So it would seem.”

“Oh c’mon...don’t pull the poor little rich boy routine because I’m not

buying it.”

“Fine.” He swallowed the last of his drink and motioned for her to come to him. A slow sensual smile fitted to his lips and for a moment she felt as if she were the one tipping back the booze. “Come here and take my mind off my troubles.”

“And how am I supposed to do that?” she asked, sliding her tongue along the seam of her lips. He unzipped his pants and let them fall open. The tip of his cock peeped up and she gasped involuntarily as hunger ripped through her. *Goddamn! Why did he have this kind of hold on her?* She envisioned herself turning on her heel and leaving him alone but her feet had other plans.

He was the devil; lounging with such lazy grace that he epitomized rich, sexy and smug with the knowledge that he was hung like a beast.

He watched her approach, something glinting in his eyes that called to her like a siren drawing her to her doom. “Is that all that will ever be between us?” she asked in a husky whisper as she knelt before him, questioning him even as she tenderly grasped that hard, straining length. Who was she kidding? She wanted to feel him as desperately as ten-dollar hooker needing to fund her next fix. It was pathetic and primal at the same time. He scooted further down in the chair and there was something grim in his stare as

he answered with a dim sadness.

“It’s not in me to offer more.”

She closed her eyes and slipped the soft spongy head into her mouth, hating that soul-deep need for something more than the physical.

What a fucked up situation.

“Pack a bag, we’re going on a trip.”

“A trip? Where?” she asked, startling at his brusque instruction and nearly dropping her book in the process when he entered the room. It’d been a little past a month and oddly, they’d fallen into a routine that was beginning to feel natural — and if that wasn’t the most screwed up statement of her life, she didn’t know what was. “Hot or cold weather?” She followed him into the walk-in closet, grudgingly admiring how handsome he was in his dark suit and tie. Power suit, that’s what it was called.

And the term was appropriate. Boston always looked ready to destroy someone with the flick of a finger. She'd never known that power was such a turn-on, but it was.

He paused as he pulled his tie free and graced her with a short, enticing smile. "Hot. Pack light. You won't be wearing much clothing."

Ohh... Her cheeks flamed but she nodded as she hurried to throw together her stuff. After she'd managed to find a few appropriate items, she had just zipped up her bag when she felt Boston at her backside, pressing against her as he nibbled her neck. "You are in my blood, you know that?" he murmured, his voice sending delightful shivers

cascading through her body. “Hard to concentrate on meetings and mergers when you’ve got this poking through your pants,” he said, pushing his hard length against her. She gasped and pushed back, secretly loving how easily she distracted him. She shoved her bag away and leaned forward, swiveling her hips in a slow, sexy motion that no doubt caused his eyes to cross, and before she knew it, he was ripping her yoga pants down to expose her ass for his view. She closed her eyes and braced herself on the bed, inhaling sharply when she felt the insistent press of his cock against her folds. Boston was insatiable but as she’d discovered, so was she. They’d had sex this morning but it was never

enough. They were two fiery balls of need that threatened to engulf them both in a red-hot pit of sexual excitement. The minute he slid into her, she shuddered and her nipples pebbled as the wondrous sensation of being utterly filled rocked her world. She reveled in the feeling that she was being stretched to the point of pain, knowing that he was impaling her on his cock like a piece of meat on a spit. The things they did together were altogether dirty and fabulous and for every time he pissed her off, there was an equal moment when he left her shaking, gasping, and buffeted by intense pleasure. There were moments when he held her so in thrall that she would've agreed to anything and everything as

long as he kept pleasuring her. Lord, at her heart she was a voracious slut.

And he seemed to love that about her.

“So sweet, so good,” he moaned as he buried himself inside her. His grip nearly bruised her tender skin but she was too fevered to notice. She arched, giving him deeper access and sucked in a tight breath as the head of his cock rubbed against her G spot. “God, Julianna...I can’t get enough of you,” he said, pounding into her with a ferocity that rocked her body but she loved the strength and the damn near viciousness of his thrusts. Suddenly, he grabbed a handful of her hair and wrenched her head back as he continued to fuck her

hard. She cried out but the quick spark of pain ratcheted her pleasure to a new level and she moaned deep in her throat. “That’s it, baby, take that cock like a good slut,” he said and she shuddered as the first wave of tingling sensation began to build. She loved when he talked dirty to her. She’d never admit it when they weren’t having sex but good heavens, she loved hearing him call her all sorts of names that would make her see red any other time. Slut, whore, bitch...they all worked. Because when she had a cock in her pussy, it was all good. If he dared to call her those things when their clothes were on, she’d hit him in a tender spot. And just like that, her legs began to tremble and an orgasm roared

through her body, clenching every muscle in delicious concert with the waves of pleasure cascading through her loins. Seconds later, Boston followed, filling her channel with his cream until she was dripping with his fluid. He gave her a few final pumps as the head of his cock pulsed inside her and then stumbled away with a rattled sigh, saying breathlessly, “Holy shit...I think you’re going to kill me,” as he sank into a large chair by the window. His spent cock lay limply against his thigh, glistening, as it slowly returned to its flaccid state. “Want to know where we’re going?” he asked when he’d caught his breath.

“Yes.”

“Too bad. Not going to tell you.”

“Then why’d you ask?”

He shrugged. “I love being the bane of your existence,” he answered with a shit-eating grin that she secretly found adorable. The bastard. He climbed to his feet. “I’m going to shower. We leave in fifteen minutes.”

“Make it thirty. I need to shower, too.”

“Nope. Fifteen. Get your ass in the shower with me to save time.”

She arched her brow. “Can you keep your hands to yourself?”

“Woman, I’m not Superman. I don’t think I could get it up again so quickly if I tried. You should be safe.”

“You’re so full of crap. You have the stamina of a seventeen-year-old

boy,” she returned wryly and he grinned. “Okay, I’ll meet you in the shower. Give me five.”

“I’ll get the water going.”

Boston pushed out of the chair and sauntered into the bathroom, shutting the door behind him.

Julianna yawned and stretched, wondering where he was taking her, when suddenly she felt incredibly queasy. *Ughh...* she stopped and bent at the waist waiting for the wave of nausea to pass. Her mouth watered and she quickly straightened as the horrifying realization followed that she might need to vomit. Had she eaten something bad? She thought of what she’d eaten this morning and couldn’t think of anything

out of the ordinary. Did food poisoning come on this suddenly? But just as she thought she was going to need to sprint to the bathroom to barf, the need passed and she was left shaky and weak. She walked into the steamy bathroom and climbed into the shower with Boston. Boston turned with a lascivious grin until he saw her frown. “What’s wrong?” he asked.

“I just got really sick all of a sudden but now it’s gone. I don’t know, it was weird.”

“Are you coming down with something?” he asked.

“I don’t know. At first I thought food poisoning but it went away and now I just feel shaky and tired. Maybe I

am coming down with the flu or something.”

“Do you want to stay home?” he asked and she was inordinately warmed by his concern. She shook her head. “Are you sure?”

“Yeah, no, I’m fine. It’s probably just low blood sugar because I haven’t eaten since breakfast.”

Boston soaped up a fine linen washcloth and began slowly washing her front. “I’d hate to cancel the trip but I’m not sure if I’m down with a vomiting partner.”

She scowled and pushed his hand away. “I think I can handle the washcloth on my own,” she said, grabbing the cloth and turning away from

him. “Don’t worry your little sex slave will be ready to perform as required.”

“Oh, now who’s being sensitive?” he teased and slapped her behind lightly. “You know that’s not what I meant.”

She ignored him and continued to wash up. The fact was for a split second everything had felt normal and natural and that was bad. Nothing about their arrangement was normal *or* natural. She’d been playing the part for a month now and it would do her some good to remember that he didn’t love her and never would — and for that matter, she didn’t love him either. But she *sorta* liked him. She definitely liked having sex with him and she really enjoyed that

he spoiled her endlessly.

Julianna rinsed under the multiple jets and left the shower, leaving him behind. He called after her, “Are you really mad?”

And she didn't know how to answer. She kinda was mad. Not sure why. She wouldn't blame him if he called her bi-polar because she probably deserved it. “I'm fine,” she forced herself to say. Better to lie than to try and decipher where her head was at the moment. She felt out of sorts — almost as if she were about to start her period. *Oh! That's it. Duh*. She was due to start her period any day. She tucked the towel around her and grabbed her phone to check the calendar. Hmm...

she should've already started.

Actually...she should've started last week.

She was never late.

Ever.

She had the internal female mechanism of an atomic clock — precise and exact.

A flush stole over her body and she sat heavily in the window chair. What the hell? Was she in a parallel universe where the crazy insane stuff happens because there was no way in hell she was sitting there afraid to acknowledge the most obvious reason for a late period.

He said he couldn't have kids.

That's why they hadn't used

protection.

He promised her he was sterile.

A tight, squeezing feeling made it hard to breathe and black dots swam before her eyes. Was this truly happening? Now she was about to pass out? *Oh holy hell...what a Twilight Zone episode.*

The last thought tumbling through her mind as she slid from the chair in a boneless heap was...*he motherfucking lied to me.*

And then she was aware of nothing.

#

Boston stared hard at the emergency room doctor, nearly boring

holes in his white lab coat. “Are you sure?” he asked with barely contained rage. “I need you to be sure.”

The doctor looked at Boston quizzically. “Yes, I am positive. She’s six weeks pregnant.”

Pregnant? Julianna was pregnant? “Are you sure about how far along she is?” he pressed, hating the sick feeling lodged in his gut. If Julianna was pregnant it could only mean one thing — she’d been fucking someone else. And the idea of someone else putting their hands on his girl was enough to make him want to bury his fist in a wall. “Are you sure, doctor?” he asked again brusquely.

“Is this an unexpected

pregnancy?” the doctor asked with a modicum of sympathy.

“You could say that,” Boston answered. “Can I see her?”

“Yes, she’s resting. She’s going to need some prenatal care. She may have been anemic before the pregnancy or at the very least low in iron and the pregnancy just made it worse but she needs to supplement to sustain the pregnancy. I can give you the name of a few quality OB-GYNs who are accepting new patients, if you’d like.”

Boston shook his head. Everything was moving too quickly. His head was jammed with rage, questions, and pain. She’d obviously cheated on him. How could she? *Because she*

doesn't love you and never will. He hated that fucking voice in his head but he couldn't deny the truth staring him in the face. She hated him anyway. What better way to bury a hatchet in his back than to get knocked up while she was still shacking up with him? Seemed a perfectly executed plan. He accepted a business card from the doctor and stalked away, going straight to her room.

She looked up and he was surprised to see a mirror of rage in her eyes. He tossed her the business card. "You might need this. Seems you're anemic and you need to supplement for your baby."

"*My baby?*" she hissed and tossed the card back at him. "You're a

fucking liar. You told me you couldn't father kids. Is this some kind of joke to you? I don't appreciate this underhanded trick to get me pregnant."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" he shot back, confused and pissed as hell that she would try and throw this back on him. "Do you hear yourself? I told you that I can't have kids and that wasn't a lie. If anyone is lying it's you. Obviously, you've been cheating on me!"

Her eyes widened and she shook her head, both outraged and equally confused. "I haven't slept with anyone but you, asshole. You'd better get your balls checked again because you put this baby in my stomach and no one else!"

Julianna's eyes flashed with real indignation and he didn't know what to think. Was it possible? But how? "I was told by multiple doctors that I couldn't father children," he said stiffly. "So if you say that I got you pregnant, *against all fucking odds*, you won't mind a paternity test."

"Bring it." She scooted up and met his gaze with a hard one of her own but he detected a subtle glitter in her eyes that made him wonder if she was telling the truth. "And when it comes back that you're the father, I'm going to shove the results up your ass!" The air between them crackled with tension and it seemed neither would back down until Julianna looked away with a tiny

shudder as her shoulders bowed and tears started to flow down her cheeks. “Get out, please. I need to be alone for awhile.”

If by some miracle, he'd somehow gotten her pregnant...a wild arc of joy and hope followed until he realized, she didn't want his baby. She was devastated by the very idea. A different thought followed that chilled his blood. “You are not to abort that child,” he growled. “If that baby is mine...you are not to get rid of it. Do you hear me?”

“Hello? Welcome to the feminist revolution. It's my body and I have the right to do what I want with it,” she retorted dully, wiping at her eyes.

“Correction. That’s *my* body. Bought and paid for. And if you have an abortion I’ll ruin you. Do you understand me?”

She closed her eyes. “Go away, Boston.”

Satisfied he’d made his point, he spun on his heel and left her in the hospital. A part of him wanted to stay and insist on the tests right this second, no matter the cost, but another part of him desperately needed space and time to think.

A baby. Was it possible? He’d long given up on the dream of being a father. He’d considered adopting but discarded the idea knowing that he didn’t have time to find a wife and then

start the adoption process. Plus, if he were being honest, he'd wanted to look into the eyes of his child and see a bit of himself staring back. It was his ego, plain and simple. He could admit that. And now that Julianna had a baby growing inside her that was possibly his? He wanted that baby. He wanted it desperately.

But Julianna hated him. More so now than ever. And he felt something for her. He wasn't sure what it was — certainly not love, hell, he wasn't that stupid — but he cared for her. And the sex was phenomenal. He wasn't ready to give that up.

Everything hinged on the paternity test. He skidded to a halt and

did an about face. He couldn't wait. He had to know.

The fate of three lives hung in the balance of one simple test.

Was he being a fool to hope?
He'd soon find out.

Is Boston the father of Julianna's baby and if so, how will that affect their relationship? Julianna isn't too happy about becoming the prospect of becoming a mother. Is it just because of Boston or is there another reason she's freaking out? Don't miss the next installment of Leverage and find out!

-Author's Note-

Dear Reader,

Thank you for going on this new adventure with me as we enter the wealthy world of the Kincaid family. I love men with trust issues! Digging into their troubled heads is always a treat. Boston has some demons to work through and Julianna is just the woman to make him face his fears. But Julianna is no slouch in the baggage department either. These two are a mess and I can't wait to drag them through one helluva journey. I hope you'll stick with me as we get to know these two fascinating people!

This story will conclude within

three installments (for those needing to know).

As always, I am humbled by the loyalty and enthusiasm of my readers. Without you, I am nothing.

If you haven't friended me on Facebook, please do so! I love connecting with my fans. Also if you haven't already, please sign up for my newsletter so you never miss a new release or contests.

Warmly,
Alexx Andria

More Work By Alexx Andria

Looking for something more by Alexx Andria? Please check out her Amazon Author Central page for a full list of her releases!

<http://www.amazon.com/Alexx-Andria/e/B006OEDHNI>

Oh, and did you know that Alexx Andria is the pseudonym of RITA-nominated romance author, Kimberly Van Meter? Well, now you do!

Check out Kimberly's Author Central page, too!

<http://amzn.to/177YZWA>

How about a teaser? Here's an excerpt from Kimberly's latest, THE SNIPER.

Jaci's head throbbed in time with the beat of her heart and her mouth tasted as if someone had stuffed it with an oily rag. She dragged her hand across her mouth, still a bit sluggish in the brain, and tried to get her bearings.

Birds.

She could hear the shrill chatter of birds somewhere. She struggled to open her eyes and when she managed to peer blearily around her surroundings, she realized with a frightening start, she

had absolutely no idea where the hell she was.

Bright morning sunlight streamed in through a dusty window and the air in the room smelled musty, as if it'd been closed up for a while and only recently reopened.

Her neck ached as if someone had pinched her and as she rubbed at the sore flesh, she recalled bits and pieces of the previous night with horrifying detail.

Sonia. Dead.

Her hand flew to her mouth and she sucked back a wild sob. How had the evening taken such a devastating turn? One minute they'd been enjoying a nice buzz from too many drinks sent their

way and the next her best friend since junior high was dead. It was all too much to take in without dissolving into a moaning, sobbing mess. She wasn't the kind of woman to break into hysterics under most circumstances but she was fairly certain she was about to have a grand level freak out any moment as the last thread holding her nerves together frayed in spectacular fashion.

Jaci blindly fumbled around her, searching for her cell phone. She had to call the police and report it. What time was it? Likely, they'd already found Sonia's body, left behind in that alley like trash. God forgive her, she'd left her best friend behind. Where the hell was her damn phone?

“If you’re looking for your cell, I tossed it,” came Nathan’s voice from the doorway, his tone matter-of-fact and brooking no argument. He held two steaming coffee mugs in his hands but even as his gesture may have appeared kind given the circumstance, Jaci didn’t know how to accept his offer given their history. She stared, unable to process everything at once. Nathan walked into the room, bare to the waist, wearing faded jeans, offering a short explanation. “Your phone has a GPS and is traceable. Sorry, but I had no choice but to ditch it. Besides, you shouldn’t be contacting anyone until I know it’s safe to do so. In the meantime, you are going off the grid.”

“What the hell is going on?” she whispered, scooting away from him, disdaining his outstretched hand and offer of coffee, though she sorely needed it. She clutched a pillow to her chest, as if that would protect her from him, and glared through a sheen of tears. “Someone shot my best friend and he was going to shoot me. You show up and k-kill that man and then, kidnap me for some reason when two months ago, you couldn’t stand to be near me another second. I don’t understand what is happening,” she couldn’t help but cry with a pathetic mewl that would’ve embarrassed her if she hadn’t been suffering from shock. “I’m in a nightmare and I can’t wake up. God, help me,” she

said, sniffing back tears. “She’s dead. Sonia is dead.” Even as she murmured the words and knew it to be true, the reality felt forced.

“I’m sorry about your friend,” he admitted with genuine remorse that confused her. “I hadn’t realized that the two of you had slipped out the back into the alley or else I would’ve been there sooner.”

She regarded him slowly, recalling a snippet of Sonia’s bawdy comments from that night. Why hadn’t she realized it earlier? The classic jawline, the hard body built with layer upon layer of muscle... “You were the one watching us?”

He offered a curt nod but didn’t

deign to explain, which only made her voice go up a shrill notch as she controlled her urge to throw something at his damnably handsome face if only to assuage the helpless rage over Sonia's senseless death for reasons she didn't understand.

“Why?” The inscrutable expression etched on the hard planes of his face gave nothing away and she looked away in disgust. “Right. More secrets. That's you, isn't it? Always hiding something. Well, as you so clearly stated when we last met, I mean nothing to you so if you please, take me home. The police can protect me from whoever is trying to kill me.”

“Jaci, you're not leaving,” he

said, shooting her down without apology. “And don’t even try. We’re deep in the Sierra mountains. You’d never make it out alive.”

“How did...” Jaci stopped in confusion, forcing her brain to work when it remained sluggish from the night before. The last she remembered she was in Los Angeles. Now she was in the mountains? She stared at Nathan, demanding answers but when her hand strayed to the sore spot on her neck she knew the answer and her stare narrowed in indignation. “You drugged me.” Neither a question nor a guess, he didn’t bother denying it. She nearly shook with impotent rage. “You bastard,” she swore softly under her breath. “How dare you.

Who do you think you are?”

“Who am I? I’m the man who saved your life. Try to remember that fact when you’re calling me a bastard. You can thank me later. For now we need to lay low. The people who want to kill you won’t stop until they’ve achieved their objective.”

“Why?” she cried, hating all this confusion and subterfuge that she had nothing to do with. “Why is this happening? I’m a graphic designer for crying out loud. I design advertising and t-shirts and coffee mugs. Whatever did I do to deserve this?”

Her impassioned cry elicited a flicker of emotion, regret possibly, she couldn’t be sure, but he shut it down

quickly. “This isn’t about you, Jaci,” he admitted tersely before walking from the room. “It’s about me.”

THE SNIPER is available
NOW!

<http://amzn.to/15NzwI8>